

*Summer Days
in
Shakespeare Land*

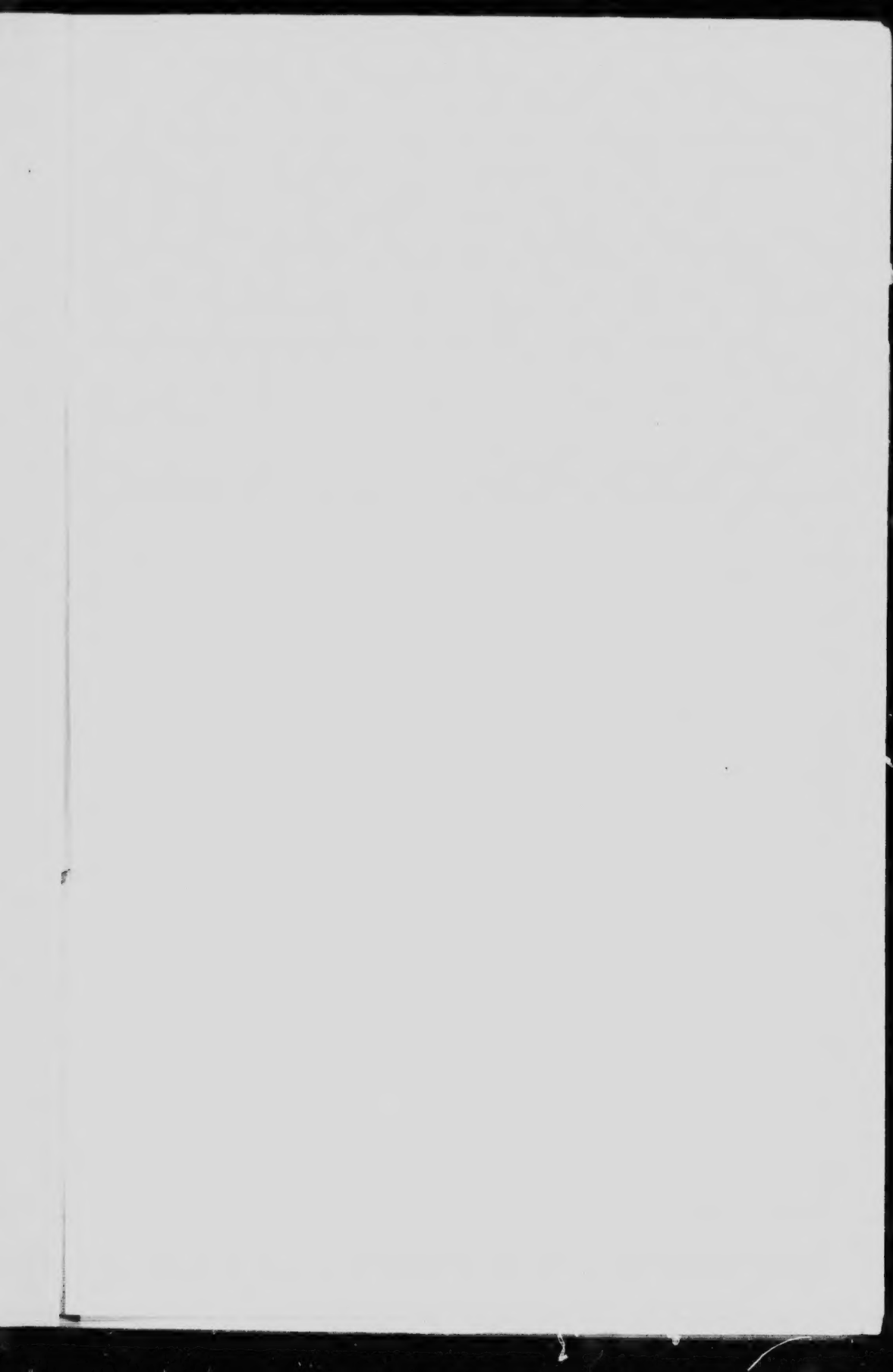


Charles G. Harper

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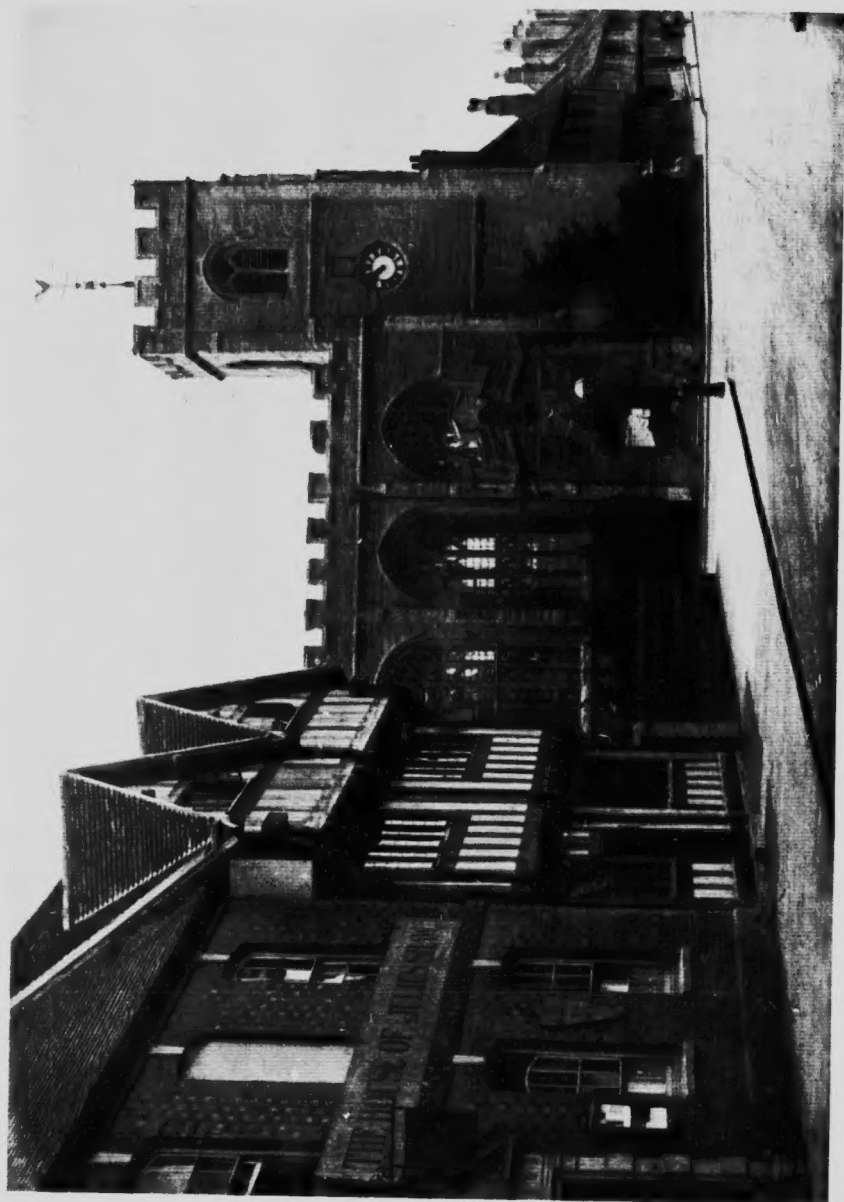




SUMMER DAYS IN
SHAKESPEARE LAND

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THE GUILD CHAPEL AND NASH'S HOUSE (NEWLY REFRONTED 1912).

[Frontispiece.]

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

OF THE ANCIENT TOWN OF
STRATFORD-ON-AVON AND THE COUNTRY ROUND
ABOUT, WITH A SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

MANY THINGS BOTH NEW AND ENTERTAINING
ARE TO BE FOUND, PRETTILY SET FORTH
FOR THE PLEASURE OF THE GENTLE READER; AND
CERTAIN FANATICS ARE HANDSOMELY

BY CHARLES G. HARPER, AND
THE MOST PART ALSO ILLUSTRATED BY HIM
A PEN

THE ILLUSTRATIONS ARE FROM PHOTOGRAPHS



TORONTO
THE MUSSON BOOK COMPANY
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SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

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OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS ARE FROM PHOTOGRAPHS



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PREFACE

By "Shakespeare Land," as used in these pages, Stratford-on-Avon and the country within a radius of from twelve to twenty miles are meant; comprising parts of Warwickshire and Gloucestershire, and some portions of Worcestershire which are mentioned by Shakespeare, or must have been familiar to him. So many thousands annually visit Stratford-on-Avon that the town, and in some lesser degree the surrounding country, are thought to be hackneyed and spoilt for the more intellectual and leisured visitor; but that is very far from being the case. Apart from such acknowledged centres of Shakespearean interest as the Birthplace at Stratford-on-Avon, the parish church, and Anne Hathaway's Cottage at Shottery; and excepting such great show-places as Kenilworth and Warwick castles, Shakespeare Land is by no means overrun, and is in every way charming and satisfying. Stratford town itself, the very centre of interest, is unspoiled; and the enterprise of the majority of Shakespearean pilgrims is of such a poor quality, and their intellectual requirements as a rule so soon satisfied, that the real beauties of the Warwickshire villages and the towns and villages of the Cotswolds are to them a sealed book. Except these byways be explored, such an essential side of Shakespeare as that I have touched upon in the chapter "Shakespeare the Countryman" will be little understood.

PREFACE

It is thus entirely a mistaken idea to think the Shakespeare Country overdone. On the contrary, it is much less known than it ought to be, and would be, were it in any other land than our own. And Stratford itself has not done so much as might have been expected in exploiting possible Shakespearean interest. Ancient house-fronts that the poet must have known still await the removal of the plaster which for two centuries or more has covered them; and the Corporation archives have not yet been thoroughly explored.

Incidentally these pages may serve to expose some of the Baconian heresies. If there be many whose judgment is overborne by the tub-thumping of the Baconians, let them turn to some of the extravagances of Donnelly and others mentioned here, and then note the many local allusions which Shakespeare and none other could have written.

The Bacon controversy, which since 1857 has offered considerable employment for speculative minds, and is still in progress, is now responsible for some six hundred books and pamphlets, monuments of perverted ingenuity and industrious research misapplied; of evidence misunderstood, and of judgment biassed by a clearly proclaimed intention to place Bacon where Shakespeare stands. These exceedingly well-read gentlemen, profited in strange concealments, have produced a deal of skimble-skamble stuff that galls our good humours. The veriest antics, they at first amuse us, but in a longer acquaintance they are, as Hotspur says of Glendower, "as tedious as a tired horse, a railing wife; Worse than a smoky house."

This is no place to fully enter the discussion, but we may here note the opinion of Harvey, the great contemporary man of science, on Bacon, the amateur of science. "My Lord Chancellor," he said, "writes about

PREFACE

Science like a Lord Chancellor." Any one who reads Bacon's poetry will notice that the poets might have applied the same taunt to his lines.

Yet they tell us now, these strange folk, eager for a little cheap notoriety, not only that "Bacon wrote the Greene, Marlowe, and Shakespeare plays," but that his is the pen that gives the Authorised Version of the Bible its literary grace. Well, well. They say the owl was a baker's daughter; a document in madness.

CHARLES G. HARPER.

Ealing, August 24, 1912.

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CHAPTER I

The Beginnings of Stratford-on-Avon.

FORTY-FIVE miles from the City of London, in the southern part of Warwickshire, and on the left, or northern bank of the Avon, stands a famous town. Not a town famed in ancient history, nor remarkable in warlike story, nor great in affairs of commerce. It was never a strong place, with menacing castle or defensive town walls with gates closed at night. It stood upon a branch road, in a thinly-peopled forest district, and in every age the wars and tumults and great social and political movements which constitute what is called "history" have passed it by.

Such is, and has been from the beginning, the town of Stratford-on-Avon, whose very name, although now charged with a special significance as the birthplace of Shakespeare, takes little hold upon the imagination when we omit the distinguishing "on Avon." For there are other Stratfords to be found upon the map of England, as necessarily there must be when we consider the origin of the name, which means merely the ford where the "street"—generally a paved Roman road—crossed a river. And as fords of this kind must

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have been very numerous along the ancient roads of this country before bridges were built, we can only be astonished that there are not more Stratfords than the five or six that are found in the gazetteers.

The Roman road that came this way was a vicinal route from the Watling Street where Birmingham now stands, through Henley-in-Arden and Alcester, the Roman station of *Alauna*. Passing over the ford of the Avon, it went to London by way of Ettington, Sunrising Hill, and Banbury. Other Roman roads, the Fosse Way and Ryknield Street, remodelled on the lines of ancient British trackways, passed east and west of Stratford at an equal distance of six miles.

All the surrounding district north of the Avon was woodland, the great Forest of Arden; and to the south of the river stretched a more low-lying country as far as the foot of the Cotswold Hills, much less thickly wooded. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when the Forest of Arden was greatly diminished, these districts owned two distinctive names: the forest being called "the Wooland," and the southward pasture-lands "the Feldon."

The travellers who came this way in early Saxon times, and perhaps even later, came to close grips with the true inwardness of things. They looked death often in the face as they went the lonely road. The wild things in the forest menaced them, floods obscured the fords, lawless men no less fierce than the animals which roamed the tangled brakes lurked and slew. "Now am I in Arden," the wayfarer might have said, anticipating Touchstone, "the more fool I; when I was at home I was in a better place; but travellers must be content."

No town or village then existed upon the banks of Avon, and the first mention of Stratford occurs in A.D. 691, when a monastery situated here is named.

STRATFORD-ON-AVON

It was an obscure house, but with extensive and valuable lands which Bishops of Worcester hungered for and finally obtained. The site of this monastery was scarcely that of the existing town of Stratford, but was where the present parish church stands, in what is known as "Old Stratford," which is on the extreme southerly limit of the town. It was thus situated at some little distance from the ford, which was of course exactly where the Clopton Bridge now crosses the river. At that ford there would probably even then have been a hermit, as there was later, charged with the due guidance of travellers, and in receipt of offerings, but of him we know nothing, and next to nothing of the monastery.

The Bishops of Worcester, having thus early obtained a grant of the monastery and its lands, became lords of the manor and so remained for centuries, wielding in their spiritual and manorial functions a very complete authority over the town which gradually arose here. To resist in any way the Church's anointed in matters spiritual or temporal would have been to kick most foolishly against the pricks, for in his one autocratic capacity he could blast your worldly prospects, and in the other he could (or it was confidently believed he could) damn you to all eternity. Thus it may well be supposed that those Right Reverend were more feared than loved.

It was an agricultural and cattle-raising community that first arose here. "Rother Street" still by its name alludes to the olden passage of the cattle, for "rother" is the good Anglo-Saxon word "hroether," for cattle. The word was known to Shakespeare, who wrote, "The pasture lards the rother's sides."

In 1216 the then Bishop of Worcester obtained a charter for a fair, the first of four obtained between that date and 1271. The fairs attracted business, and about

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1290 the first market was founded. The town had begun to grow, slowly, it is true, but substantially. At this period also that Guild arose which was originally a religious and charitable fraternity, but eventually developed into surprising issues, founding a grammar-school and becoming a tradesmen's society, whence the incorporation of the town in 1553, and the establishment of a town council derived. Camden, writing about this time, was able to describe it as "a proper little mercat towne."

In that era which witnessed the incorporation of the town of Stratford-on-Avon and the birth of Shakespeare the population was some 2000. It is now about 8300; a very moderate increase in three hundred and fifty years, and much below the average rate for towns, by which Stratford might now have had a population of about 16,000.

The incorporation of this little town in the reign of Edward the Sixth was a great event locally. It included the restitution to the people of the place of the buildings and the property of the Guild of Holy Cross which had been confiscated in 1547, when also the inhabitants had been relieved from the yoke of the Bishops of Worcester, whose manor had been taken away from them. It is true that the manorial rights had not been abolished and that the property and its various ancient privileges had only been transferred to other owners, but it was something to the good that the Church no longer possessed these things. These were not arbitrary changes, the whim of this monarch or that, Henry the Eighth and Edward the Sixth did only what others in their place would and must have done. They were certainly sovereigns with convictions of their own, but their attitude of mind was but the *Zeitgeist*, the spirit of the age, and they did not so much originate it as

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be swayed by it. Those statesmen who have been held meanly subservient to them were, after all, men of like convictions. They saw the old order to be outworn and existing institutions ripe for change. It was the age of the Renaissance. Everywhere was the new spirit, which was remodelling thought as well as material things. It was the age, above all things, of the new learning. These feelings led the advisers of the young king, Edward the Sixth, to counsel the restitution to the town of the property of the Guild dissolved only six years earlier, with the important provision that the grammar-school was to be re-established and maintained out of its revenues. To this provision we distinctly owe the dramatist, William Shakespeare, who was born at the very time when the educational advantages thus secured to the children of the townsfolk had settled down into smoothly working order. Education cannot produce a Shakespeare, it cannot create genius, but it can give genius that chance in early elementary training without which even the most adaptive minds lose their direction.

The ancient buildings of the Guild, which after its long career as a kind of lay brotherhood for what modern people would style "social service," had attained an unlooked-for development as the town authority, thus provided Stratford with its Grammar School and its first town-hall. In those timbered rooms the scholars received their education, and for eighty years, until 1633, when the first hall built especially for the corporation was opened, the aldermen and councillors met there. Among them was John Shakespeare.

CHAPTER II

The Shakespeares—John Shakespeare, Glover, Wool-merchant—Birth of William Shakespeare—Rise and Decline of John Shakespeare—Early Marriage of William.

A MODERN man who now chanced to own the name of "Shakespeare" would feel proud, even of that fortuitous and remote association with the greatest figure in English literature. He might even try to live up to it, although the probabilities are that he would quite early forgo the attempt and become a backslider to commonplace. But available records tell us no good of the earliest bearers of the name. The first Shakespeare of whom we have any notice was a John of that name. He was hanged in 1248, for robbery. It is a very long time ago since this malefactor suffered, and perhaps he was one of those very many unfortunate persons who have been in all ages wrongfully convicted. But the name was not in olden times a respectable one. It signified originally one who wielded a spear; not a chivalric and romantic knight warring with the infidel in Palestine, or jousting to uphold the claims to beauty of his chosen lady, but a common soldier, a rough man-at-arms; one who was in great request in his country's wars, but was accounted an undesirable when the piping times of peace were come again and every man desired nothing better than to sit beneath his own vine and fig-tree. We have record of a certain Shakespeare who grew so weary of the name that he changed it for "Saunders." But Time was presently to bring revenge, when William

THE SHAKESPEARES

Shakespeare, afterwards to become a poet and dramatist of unapproachable excellence, was born, to make the choice of that recreant bearer of the name look ridiculous.

One Shakespeare before the dramatist's time had reached not only respectability but some kind of local eminence. This was Isabel Shakespeare, who became Prioress of the Priory of Baddesley Clinton, near Knowle. Baddesley Clinton is in the ancient and far-spreading Forest of Arden, and near it is the village of Rowington, where there still remains the very picturesque fifteenth-century mansion called Shakespeare Hall, which is said to have been in the dramatist's time the residence of a Thomas Shakespeare, an uncle. But William Shakespeare's genealogy has not been convincingly taken back beyond his grandfather Richard (whose very Christian name is only traditional), who is stated to have been a farmer at Snitterfield, three miles from Stratford-on-Avon.

Warwickshire was, in fact, extremely rich in Shakespeares, many of them no relatives of the dramatist's family. They grew in every hedgerow, and very many of them owned the Christian name of William, but they spelled their patronymic in an amazing number of ways. It is said to be capable of four thousand variations. We will forbear the most of these. "Shaxpeare" is the commonest form. The marriage-bond for William Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway spells his name "Shagspere," and the dramatist himself spells it in two different ways in the three signatures on his will, which forms to the Baconians conclusive proof of the two following contradictory propositions (1) that he did not know how to spell his own name, and (2) that, the spelling being different, the so-called signatures were written by a law-clerk! As a matter of fact, the

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spelling of one's name was in those times a matter of taste and fancy, which constantly varied. Sir Walter Raleigh, contemporary with Shakespeare, was a scholar whom no one will declare an illiterate, yet he wrote his own name, with a fine disregard of consistency and of what future generations might say, "Rawley," "Ralegh," "Rawleighe" and "Rauleygh."

In any case, the "law-clerk" theory will hardly do. A law-clerk who wrote such a shocking bad hand as the six signatures of Shakespeare display could not have earned his living with lawyers and conveyancers. They are signatures, nearly all of them, which might confidently be taken to a chemist, to be "made up," but exactly how he would read the "prescription" must be left to the imagination.

Sure and certain foothold upon genealogical fact is only reached with William Shakespeare's father, who established himself at Stratford-on-Avon about 1551, when he seems to have been twenty-one years of age. He was described at various times as a fell-monger and glover, a woolstapler, a butcher and a dealer in hay and corn. Probably, as a son of the farmer at Snitterfield, he was interested in most of these trades. His home and place of business in the town was in Henley Street, then, as now, one of the meaner streets of the place. Its name derives from this forming the way out of Stratford to the town of Henley-in-Arden.

The very first thing we have recorded of John Shakespeare at Stratford is his being fined twelve pence for having a muck-heap in front of his door. Twelve pence in that day was equal to about eight shillings and six-pence of our own times; and thus, when we consider the then notoriously dirty and insanitary condition of Stratford, endured with fortitude, if not with cheerfulness by the burgesses, we are forced to the conclusion

THE SHAKESPEARES

that Mr. John Shakespeare's muck-heap must have been a super muck-heap, an extremely large and offensive specimen, that made the gorge of even the least squeamish of his fellow-townsmen rise. Two other tradesmen were fined at the same time, and in 1558 he was, in company with four others (among whom was the chief alderman, Francis Burbage) fined in the smaller sum of fourpence for not keeping his gutter clean.

By 1556, however, he would seem to have been prospering, for in that year he purchased two copyhold tenements, one in Henley Street, next the house and shop now known as "the birthplace" which he was already occupying; the other in Greenhill Street. Next year he married Mary Arden, of Wilmcote, three miles from Stratford, daughter of Robert Arden, yeoman farmer of that place, said on insufficient evidence to have been kin to the ancient knightly family of Arden. She had become, on her father's death in December 1556, owner of landed property called Asbies, at Wilmcote, and some like interests at Snitterfield, in common with her brothers and sisters. She was thus, in a small way, an heiress. Wilmcote being then merely a hamlet in the parish of Aston Cantlow, they were married at the church of that place.

John Shakespeare was now a rising tradesman, and in this same auspicious year became a member of the town council, a body then newly established, upon the granting of a charter of incorporation in 1553.

On September 15th, 1558 his daughter Joan was baptized. She died an infant. In 1565, after serving various municipal offices, he became an alderman. Meanwhile, at the close of November 1562, a daughter, Margaret, was born, who died the next year; and in 1564, on April 26th, his son William was baptized. The date of the poet's birth is traditionally St. George's Day,

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April 23rd; now, with the alteration in the calendar, identical with May 5th.

In that year the town was scourged by a terrible visitation of the plague, and John Shakespeare is recorded, among others, as a contributor to funds for the poor who suffered by it. On August 30th he paid twelve pence; on September 6th, sixpence; on the 27th of the same month another sixpence; and on October 20th eightpence; about twenty-two shillings of our money. It is only by tradition—but that a very old one—that William Shakespeare was born at “the birthplace” in Henley Street; but there is no reasonable excuse for doubting it, unless we like to think that he was born at the picturesque old house in the village of Clifford Chambers, which afterwards became the vicarage and is now a farmhouse. A John Shakespeare was at that time living there, two miles only from Stratford, and it has been suggested that he is identical with the father of William, and that in this plague year he took the precaution of removing his wife out of danger.

In 1566 we find a link between the Shakespeares and the Hathaways in John Shakespeare standing surety for Richard Hathaway; and in the same year his son Gilbert was born; another Joan being born in 1569. In 1568 and 1571 he attained the highest municipal offices, being elected high-bailiff and senior alderman, and thus, as chief magistrate, is found described in local documents as “Mr.” Shakespeare. In 1571 also his daughter Anne, who died in 1579, was born; and in 1573 a son, Richard. In 1575 he purchased the freehold of “the birthplace” from one Edmund Hall, for £40.

Early in 1578 the first note of ill-fortune is sounded in the career of John Shakespeare. Some financial disaster had befallen him. In January, when the town council had decided to provide weapons for two billmen, a body

THE SHAKESPEARES

of pikemen, and one archer, and assessed the aldermen for six shillings and eightpence each and the burgesses at half that amount, two of the aldermen were excused the full pay. One, Mr. Plumley, was charged five shillings, and Mr. Shakespeare was to pay only three and fourpence. The following year he defaulted in an assessment for the same amount. Meanwhile, he had been obliged to mortgage Asbies, which had come to him with his wife, and to sell the interests at Snitterfield. The Shakespeares, although they in after years again grew prosperous, never recovered Asbies.

No one knows what caused these straitened circumstances. Possibly it was some disastrous speculation in corn. In the midst of this trouble, his seven-year-old daughter, Anne, died, and another son, Edmund, was born, 1580. He ceased to attend meetings of the town council, and his son William entered into an improvident marriage.

CHAPTER III

Anne Hathaway, Shakespeare's bride.—The hasty marriage Shakespeare's wild young days He leaves for London Grendon Underwood.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE was but eighteen and a half years of age when he married. Legally, he was an "infant." His wife was by almost eight years his senior, but if we agree with Bacon's saying, that a man finds himself ten years older the day after his marriage, the disparity became at once more than rectified. She was one Anne, or Agnes, Hathaway; her father, Richard, being a farmer of Shottery. The Hathaways were numerous in this district, there being at that time no fewer than three families of the name in Shottery and others in Stratford. Anne had no fewer than eight brothers and sisters, all of whom, except two, are mentioned in their father's will. Richard, who describes himself in his will as "husbandman," executed that document on September 1st, 1581, and died probably in the June following, for his will was proved in London on July 9th, 1582. Storms of rival theories have raged around the mystery surrounding this marriage, of which the register does not exist. It is claimed that Shakespeare was married at Temple Grafton, Luddington, Billesley, and elsewhere, but no shadow of evidence can be adduced for any of these places. All we know is that on November 28th, 1582, Fulke Sandells and John Richardson, farmers,

ANNE HATHAWAY

of Stratford, who had been respectively one of the "supervisors" and one of the witnesses of Richard Hathaway's will, went to Worcester and there entered into a "Bond in £40 against Impediments, to defend and save harmless the right reverend father in God John, Lord Bishop of Worcester" from any complaint or process that might by any possibility arise out of his licensing the marriage with only once asking the banns. These two bondsmen declared that "William Shagspere, one thone partie and Anne Hathaway of Stratford" (Shottery was and is a hamlet in the parish of Stratford-on-Avon) "in the dioeces of Worcester, maiden, may lawfully solemnize marriage together." This document, discovered in the Worcester Registry in 1836, is sufficiently clear and explicit; but a complication is introduced by a license issued the day before by the Bishop for a marriage "inter Wm. Shaxpere et Anna Whateley de Temple Grafton." It has been suggested that, as there were Whateleys living in the neighbourhood, and that as there were numerous Shakespeares also, with many Williams among them, this was quite another couple, while others contend that "Whateley" was a mistake of one of the clerks employed in the Bishop's registry, and that the name of Temple Grafton as "place of residence" of the bride was a further mistake, that being the place intended for the ceremony. In any case, the point is of minor interest for the registers of Temple Grafton do not go back to that date, and the fabric of the church itself is quite new. We do not know, therefore, where Shakespeare was married, nor when; and can but assume that the wedding took place shortly after the bond was signed.

Six months later, Shakespeare's eldest daughter was born, for we see in the register of baptisms in Holy Trinity church, Stratford, the entry:—

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"1583, May 26th, Susanna, daughter to William Shakespere."

The reason for the hurried visit of the two farmers to Worcester, to hasten on the marriage with but one "asking" in church now becomes evident. They were friends of the late Richard Hathaway, and were determined that young Shakespeare should not get out of marrying the girl he had wronged, shall we say? Well, no. There have been many moralists excessively shocked at this pre-nuptial intimacy, and they assert that Shakespeare seduced Anne Hathaway.

But young men of just over eighteen years of age do not, I think, beguile young women nearly eight years older. Anne probably seduced him; for woman is more frequently the huntress and the chooser, and man is a very helpless creature before her wiles.

The extravagances of the Baconians may well be illustrated here, for although the subject of Shakespeare's marriage has no bearing upon the famous cryptogram and the authorship of the plays, Donnelly spreads himself generously all over Shakespeare's life, and lightly settles for us the mystery of the bond *re* the marriage of Anne Hathaway and the license to marry Anne Whateley by suggesting that *both* names are correct and refer to the same persons. He says Anne Hathaway married a Whateley and that it was as a widow she married William Shakespeare, her maiden name being given in the bond by mistake! The sheer absurdity of this is obvious when we consider that if Mr. Donnelly is right, then the bondsmen made the yet grosser error of describing the widow as a "maiden." She was actually at that time neither wife, maid nor widow.

Again, Richard Hathaway the father made his will in September 1581, leaving (*inter alia*) a bequest to Anne "to be paid unto her at the daie of her marriage." She

ANNE HATHAWAY

was a single young woman then, and yet according to the Donnellian view she was already, fifteen months later, a widow, again about to be married.

Apologists for this hasty marriage, jealous for the reputation of Shakespeare, are keen to find an excuse in the supposition that he was a Roman Catholic and that he was already married secretly, probably in the room in the roof of Shottery Manor House, which is supposed to have been used at this period as a place of secret worship. But there is no basis for forming any theory as to Shakespeare's religious convictions. A yet more favourite assumption is that Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway went through the ceremony of "hand-fasting," a formal betrothal which, although not a complete marriage and not carrying with it the privileges of marriage was a bar to either of the parties marrying another. Jack was thus made sure of his Jill; and, perhaps even more important, Jill was certain of her Jack. But if this ceremony had taken place, there would have been no necessity for that hasty journey of those two friends of the Hathaways to Worcester.

Nothing is known of the attitude of Shakespeare's parents towards the marriage, nor has any one ever suggested how he supported himself, his wife and family in the years before he left Stratford for London. At the close of January 1585, his twin son and daughter, Hamnet and Judith were born, and they were baptized at Stratford church on February 2nd. Whether he assisted his father in his business of glover, or helped on his farm, or whether he became assistant master at the Grammar School, as sometimes suggested, is mere matter for speculation. John Aubrey, picking up gossip at Stratford, writes—

"Mr. William Shakespear was borne at Stratford upon Avon in the county of Warwick. His father was a

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

butcher, and I have been told heretofore by some of the neighbours, that when he was a boy he exercised his father's trade, but when he kill'd a calfe he would doe it in a high style, and make a speech."

That may or may not be true, but it looks as though William had, about this impressionable age, become stage-struck. He had had numerous opportunities of seeing the players, for his father had in his more prosperous days been a patron of the strolling companies, both as a private individual and as a member of the town council. In 1569 two such troupes, who called themselves the "Queen's servants," and "servants of the Earl of Warwick," gave performances before the corporation and were paid out of the public monies; a forecast of the municipal theatre! And no doubt John Shakespeare, together with many other Stratford people, went over to Kenilworth during the magnificent pageants given there by Dudley, Earl of Leicester, in 1573, in honour of Queen Elizabeth; taking with him his little boy, then eleven years of age. Thus would the foundations of an ambition be laid.

At this time, 1585, John Shakespeare's affairs, from whatever cause, were under a cloud. They had been declining since 1578, when he had been obliged to mortgage some of the property that had been his wife's, and now he was deprived of his alderman's gown. William about this time, whether in 1585 or 1587 is uncertain, left Stratford for London, whither some of his boyhood's friends had already preceded him, among them Richard Field.

Stratford at this time was certainly no place for William, if he wished to emulate Dr. Samuel Smiles' worthies and conform to the gospel of getting on in the world, the most popular gospel ever preached. In 1587, Nicholas Lane, one of his father's creditors, sought to

SHAKESPEARE GOES TO LONDON

distrain upon John Shakespeare's goods, but the sheriff's officers returned the doleful tale of "no effects," and so he had his trouble for nothing. It is, however, curious that even when reduced to his last straits, John Shakespeare never sold his property, the house in which he lived and carried on business, in Henley Street.

In addition to the discredit attaching to being thus one of the Shakespeares who had come down in the world, William, according to the very old, strong and persistent tradition, was at this time showing a very rakety disposition. He consorted with the wilder young men of the town and went on drinking bouts with them. Sometimes, with them, he raided the neighbouring parks and killed the deer and poached other game; and the old tradition hints that on these occasions the others made good their escape and Shakespeare was generally caught. Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote, who was the chief sufferer from the exploits of these youths, is said to have had Shakespeare whipped, imprisoned and fined for his part in them.

To London, therefore, William Shakespeare made his way. With what credentials, if any, did he go? He had friends in London, among them Richard Field, a schoolfellow, who in 1579 had gone thither, to become apprentice to a printer, and in 1587, about this time when Shakespeare left home, had set up in business for himself and become a member of the Stationers' Company. Shakespeare may quite reasonably have sought his help or advice; and certainly Field six years later published Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, dedicated to Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, the foremost literary and dramatic patron of the age, from whose friendship and powerful aid all intellectual aspirants hoped much.

It is quite likely that Shakespeare left Stratford

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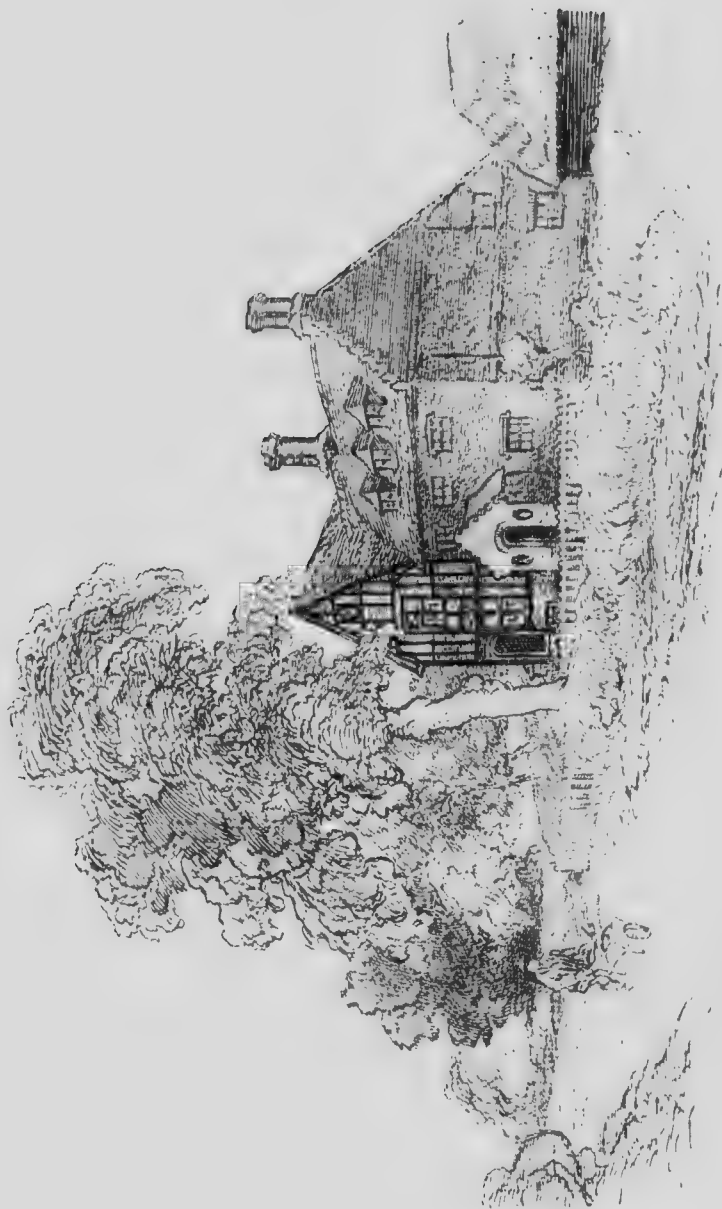
with a company of travelling actors, and reaching town with them, gradually drifted into regular employment at one of the only two London theatres that then existed, "The Theatre" and the "Curtain" both in Shoreditch.

It is of some interest to speculate upon the manner in which Shakespeare journeyed to London, and the way he went. Was he obliged to walk it, in the traditional manner of the poor countryman seeking his fortune in the great metropolis? Or did he make the journey by the carrier's cart? There are two principal roads by which he may have gone; by Newbold-on-Stour, Long Compton, Chapel House, and Woodstock to Oxford, Beaconsfield and through High Wycombe and Uxbridge, 95 miles; or he might have chosen to go by Ettington, Pillerton Priors, Sunrising Hill, Wroxton and Banbury, through Aynho, Bicester, Aylesbury, Tring and Watford to London, $92\frac{3}{4}$ miles. Such an one as he would probably first go to London by way of Oxford, for, like Thomas Hardy's "Jude the Obscure," he would doubtless think it "a city of light." There are traditions at Oxford of Shakespeare's staying at the "Crown" inn in the Cornmarket in after years. Sometimes he would doubtless go by the Banbury and Bicester route: and along it, at the village of Grendon Underwood, to the left of the road between Bicester and Aylesbury, as you journey towards London, there still linger very precise traditions of Shakespeare having stayed at what was formerly the "Old Ship" inn.

Grendon Underwood, or "under Bernwode" as it is styled in old records, appears in an old rhyme as—

"The dirtiest town that ever stood,"

but it was never a town, and, whatever may once have been its condition, it is no longer dirty. It is not at



"SHAKESPEARE FARM," FORMERLY THE "SHIP" INN, GRENDOV AND WOOD.

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first sight easily to be understood why Shakespeare, or any other traveller of that age journeying the long straight stretch of the old Roman road, the Akeman Street, between Bicester and Aylesbury, should want to go a mile and a quarter out of his way for the purpose of visiting this place, but that they did so is sufficiently proved by the comparative importance of the house that was until about a hundred and twelve years ago the "Old Ship" and is now known as "Shakespeare Farm." It is clearly too large ever to have been built for an ordinary village inn, and is said to have formerly been even larger. If, however, we refer to old maps of the district, it will be found that, for some unexplained reason, the ancient forthright Roman road had gone out of use, and that instead of proceeding direct, along the Akeman Street, the wayfarers of old went a circuitous course, through Grendon Underwood. When this deviation took place does not appear; but it was obviously one of long standing. The first available map showing the roads of the district is that by Emanuel Bowen, 1756, in which the Akeman Street is not shown; the only road given being that which winds through Grendon. The next map to be issued—that by Thomas Jeffreys, 1788—gives the Akeman Street, running direct, between point and point, and avoiding Grendon, as it does now. That was the great era of turnpike-acts, providing for the repair and restoration of old roads, and the making of new; and this was one of the many highways then restored. The "Old Ship" inn, at Grendon Underwood, at which Shakespeare and many generations of travellers had halted, at once declined with the making of the direct road, and soon retired into private life.

The Shakespeare tradition comes down to us through John Aubrey, who, writing in 1680, says—

"The humour of the constable, in *Midsomer-night's*

GRENDON UNDERWOOD

Dreams,¹ he happened to take at Grendon, in Bucks — I think it was Midsomer night that he happened to lye there—which is the roade from London to Stratford, and there was living that constable about 1642, when I first came to Oxon."

The village constable referred to was well known to one Josias Howe, son of the rector, born at Grendon, March 20th, 1612, died August 28th, 1701, who told Aubrey the story at Oxford, in 1642.

The lofty gabled red brick and timber end of Shakespeare Farm, illustrated here, is the earlier part of the building, although the whole of it is probably as old as Shakespeare's time. That earlier wing, the part to which tradition points, is not now occupied, and is, in fact, in a very dilapidated condition, occasional floorboards, and even some of the stairs, being missing. Where the wearied guests of long ago rested, broody hens are set by the careful farmer's wife on their clutches of eggs. There is little interesting in the architectural way in these dark and deserted rooms, but the flat, pierced, wooden banisters of the staircase are genuinely old and quaint.

¹ He should have said *Much Ado About Nothing*.

CHAPTER IV

Continued decline in the affairs of John Shakespeare—William Shakespeare's success in London—Death of Hamnet, William Shakespeare's only son—Shakespeare buys New Place—He retires to Stratford—Writes his last play, *The Tempest*—His death.

THAT Shakespeare left his wife and family at home at Stratford-on-Avon every one takes for granted. He "deserted his family," says a rabid Baconian, who elsewhere complains of the lack of evidence to support believers in the dramatist; forgetting that there is no evidence for this "desertion" story; only one of those many blanks in the life of this elusive man, by which it would appear that while he was reaching fame and making money in London as a playwright and an actor, he held no communication with his kith and kin. There remains no local record of William Shakespeare at Stratford-on-Avon between the year 1587, when he joined with his father in mortgaging the property at Ashbies, Wilmeote, which had been his mother's marriage portion, until 1596, when the register of the death of Hamnet, his only son, occurs at Stratford church, on August 11th. But this is sheer negative evidence of his not having visited his native town for over ten years, and is on a par with the famous Baconian argument that *because* no scrap of Shakespeare's handwriting, except six almost illegible signatures, has survived, *therefore* he cannot have written the plays still attributed to him.

Meanwhile, his father's affairs steadily grew worse,

SUCCESS IN LONDON

and in 1592 he was returned as a "recusant" by the commissioners who visited the town for the purpose of fining the statutable fine of £20 all those who had not attended church for one month. John Shakespeare's recusancy has been unwarrantably assumed to be due to Roman Catholic obstinacy; but the fine was remitted because it was shown that he was afraid to go to church "for proesesse of debt"; which, together with the infirmities of age, or sickness, was a lawful excuse.

Shakespeare's success in London as an actor, a reviser and editor of old and out-of-date plays, as manager, theatre-proprietor and playwright, is due to that sprack-witted capacity for excelling in almost any chosen field of intellectual activity with which a born genius is gifted. The saying that "genius is a capacity for taking pains" is a dull, plodding man's definition. Genius will very often fling away the rewards of its powers through just this lack of staying power, and no plodding pains will supply that intuitive knowledge, that instant perception, which is what we call genius.

It was the psychological moment for such an one as Shakespeare to come to London. The drama had a future before it: the intellectual receptivity of the Renaissance permeated all classes, and the country was prosperous and growing luxurious. Playwrights were numerous, but as yet their productions had not reached a high level, excepting those of Marlowe, to whose inspiration Shakespeare at first owed much. If Shakespeare lived in these times he would be called a shameless plagiarist, for he went to other authors for his plots—as Chaucer had done with his *Canterbury Tales*, two hundred years earlier, and as all others had done in between. Not a man of them would escape the charge; but what Shakespeare took of plot-

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construction and of dialogue he transmuted from the dull and soulless lines we could not endure to read to-day, into a clear fount of wit, wisdom and literary beauty.

Shakespeare's career of playwright began as a hack writer and cobbler of existing plays. As an actor his technical knowledge of the requirements of the stage rendered his help invaluable to managers, and the conditions of that time gave no remedy to any author whose plays were thus treated. It may be supposed, from lack of evidence to the contrary, that most other dramatic authors submitted to this treatment in silence; perhaps because they had all been employed, at some time or other in the same way. But one man seems to have bitterly resented a mere actor presuming to call himself an author. This was Robert Greene, who died Sept. 3rd, 1592, after a long career of play-writing and pamphleteering. He died a disappointed man, and wrote a farewell tract, published after his death, which includes a warning to his fellow-authors and an undoubted attack upon Shakespeare, under the thin disguise of "Shake-scene."

It is to be considered that Shakespeare had by this time been five years in London: that he had proved himself singularly adaptable, and had finally, on March 3rd, 1592, attained his first popular success, in the production at the newly-opened "Rose Theatre" on Bankside, Southwark (third London playhouse, opened February 19th, 1592), of *Henry the Sixth*. It was a veritable triumph. The author played in his own piece, and the other dramatists looked on in dismay. Jealousy does not seem to have followed Shakespeare's good fortune, and the numerous references to him as poet and playwright by others are kindly and fully recognise his superiority. Only Greene's posthumous work exists to show how one resented it. The tract

SHAKESPEARE THE ACTOR

has the singular title of "A Groats-Worth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance." Incidentally it warns brother-dramatists against "an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers that with his *Tyggers heart wrapt in a players hide* supposes he is as well able to bumbast out a blanke verse as the best of you; and being an absolute *Johannes factotum* is, in his owne conceite, the only Shake-scene in a countrie."

The identification of this crow in borrowed plumage, this "Shake-scene," is completed by the line, "O tiger's heart, wrapp'd in a woman's hide," which is a quotation from the Third Part of *Henry the Sixth*, where the Duke of York addresses Queen Margaret; while the term "*Johannes factotum*," i.e. "Johnny Do-everything," is a sneer at Shakespeare's adaptability and many-sided activities.

The merits of Shakespeare as an actor are uncertain. Greene seems to imply that he was of the ranting, bellowing type who tore a passion to tatters and split the ears of the groundlings. Rowe, who wrote of him in 1709 says: "The top of his performance (as an actor) was the Ghost in his own *Hamlet*"; not an exacting part; other traditions say Adam in *As You Like It*, an even less important character, was his favourite; but the suggestion we love the better to believe is that his best part was the cynical, melancholy, philosophic Jaques. Donnelly, chief of the Bacon heretics, has in his *Great Cryptogram*, a weird story of how Bacon wrote the part of Falstaff for Shakespeare, to fit his great greasy stomach. He knew Shakespeare could not act, and so provided a part in which no acting should be required; turning Shakespeare's natural disabilities to account, so that, if the audience could not laugh with him in his acting, they should laugh at him and dissolve into merriment at the clumsy antics of so fat a man!

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There are actor-managers in our times—no actor-author-managers like Shakespeare—who deserve the cat-calls and the missiles of their audiences. They do not merely “lag superfluous on the stage,” but ought never to be on it; like the celebrated actor-manager whose impersonation of Hamlet was, according to Sir W. S. Gilbert’s caustic remark, “funny without being vulgar.” It is not conceivable that Shakespeare himself, who puts such excellent advice to actors into the mouth of Hamlet, should himself have been incompetent.

With Shakespeare’s leap into fame, in 1592, went a simultaneous “boom,” as it might now be termed, in theatres and the drama. Theatres multiplied in London, theatrical companies grew prosperous, and such men as Shakespeare, Alleyn and the Burbages amassed wealth.

In 1596 died William Shakespeare’s only son, Hamnet, whose burial register in the books of Holy Trinity church, Stratford, runs—

“August 11th, Hamnet, filius William Shakespeare.” His father must surely have been present on this occasion. This year is generally said to be that in which the dramatist who in his time had played many parts, returned to his native town, a made man. He came back with his triumphs ringing fresh in his ears, for that season witnessed the great success of the production of *Romeo and Juliet*. In July, also, his father had applied to the Heralds’ College for a grant of arms, an application for a patent of gentility which would have come absurdly from a penniless tradesman. The inference therefore, although we have no documentary evidence to that effect, is that William Shakespeare had not only kept in touch with his people, but had helped his father out of his difficulties and was himself

RETURN TO STRATFORD

the instigator of this application for a grant of arms. The application was eventually successful. The arms thus conferred are : " Or, on a bend sable, a tilting spear of the first, point upwards, steeled proper. Crest, a falcon, his wings displayed, argent, standing upon a wreath of his colours and supporting a spear in pale, or." The motto chosen was " Non sanz droiet."

What was this right to heraldic honours and the implied gentility they carried, the Shakespeares claimed ? It was based upon a quibble that John Shakespeare's " parent, great-grandfather and late antecessor, for his faithful and approved service to the most prudent prince king H. 7 of famous memorie, was advanced and rewarded with lands and tenements geven to him," etc. The description of the miserly Henry the Seventh as " prudent " is, like " mobled queen," distinctly " good "; but we are not greatly concerned with that, only with the fact that the martial and loyal antecessors claimed for John Shakespeare were really those of his wife. He adopted his wife's family, or rather, her family's pretensions to call cousins with the more famous Ardens.

William Shakespeare had returned to Stratford a well-to-do man, with an income which has been estimated at about £1300 of our money, but he had not yet completed his work, and his reappearance in his native town was not permanent. You figure him now, the dramatist and manager, with considerable shares in the Globe and Blackfriars Theatres, rather concerned to relinquish the trade—not a profession, really, you know—of actor, but with his company much in request at Court and in the mansions of the great. He was, one thinks, a little sobered by the passage of time ; and by the death, this year, of his only son ; and quite sensible of the dignity that new patent of arms had conferred

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upon his father and himself. To mark it, he bought in 1597 a residence, the best residence in the town, although woefully out of repair. It was known, with some awe, to his contemporaries as "the great house." Sixty pounds sterling was the purchase money: we will say £480 of present value. It was bought so cheaply probably because of its dilapidated condition, for it seems to have been built by Sir Hugh Clopton in 1485, and at this time was "in great ruyne & decay & unrepayred." Shakespeare thoroughly renovated his newly-acquired property, and styled it "New Place."

He did not, apparently, at once take up his residence here, for his theatrical company was acting before the Queen at Whitehall in the spring and he would doubtless have been present, and perhaps accompanied them when they were on tour in Kent and Sussex in the summer. But he was at Stratford a part of the next year, which was a year of scarcity. He had accumulated a large stock of corn, over against the shortage, and in a return made of the quantity of grain held in the town he held ten quarters. In the January of this year he contemplated buying some land at Shotttery. "Our countriman, Mr. Shaksper," wrote Abraham Sturley to Richard Quiney on January 24th, "is willinge to disburse some monei upon some od yarde land or other att Shotterei or neare about us." It would seem that Shakespeare did not, after all, purchase this land. Perhaps he could not get it a bargain, and what we know of his business transactions, small though it may be, all goes to show that he was a keen dealer and not at all likely to spend his money rashly.

This year is remarkable for the writing of a letter to Shakespeare by Richard Quiney, the only letter addressed to him now in existence. It is dated October

A LETTER TO SHAKESPEARE

25th and addressed from Carter Lane, in the City of London. Shakespeare was apparently then at Stratford—

“TO MY LOVEINGE GOOD FFRENDE AND CONTREY-
MANN MR. WM. SHACKESPERE DLR THIEES :

“Loveinge Contreyman, I am bolde of yow, as of a ffrende, craveinge yowr helpe with xxx *li* uppon Mr. Bushell's & my securitytee, or Mr. Myttons with me. Mr. Rosswell is nott come to London as yeate. & I have especiall cawse yow shall ffrende me mucche in helpeinge me out of all the debettes I owe in London, I thancke god, & mucche quiet my mynde wch wolde nott be indebted. I am nowe towards the Cowrte, in hope of answer for the dispatche of my Buysenes. Yow shall nether loase credytt nor monney by me, the Lorde wyllinge; & nowe butt perswade yowrself soe, as I hope, & yow shall not need to feare butt with all hartie thanckefulnes I wyll holde my tyme & content yowr ffrende, & yf we Bargaine farther, yow shalbe the paiem^r. yowrselfe. My tyme biddes me hastene to an ende, & soe I commit thys [to] yowr care, & hope of your helpe. I feare I shall nott be backe thys night ffrom the Cowrte. Haste. The Lorde be with yow and with vs all, amen. ffrom the Bell in Carter Lane, the 25th October, 1598.

“Yowrs in all kyndnes

“RYE. QUYNEY.”

There is nothing to show directly what was Shakespeare's reply to this request for the loan of so considerable a sum; which, however, was not the personal matter it would seem to be. Quiney was a substantial man, mercer and alderman of Stratford, and was in London, incurring debts in the interests of the town,

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whose law business he was furthering. He wanted nothing for himself.

It is curious that this letter was discovered among the town's papers, not among any Shakespeare relics, and it is believed was never actually sent after being written; for another letter is extant, addressed by one of the town council, Abraham Sturley, to Quiney, on November 4th, in which he says: "Ur letter of the 25 October . . . which imported . . . that our countryman Mr. Wm. Shak. would procure us monei. . . ." It would appear, therefore, that on the very day he was writing, Quiney had received assurance from Shakespeare that he would lend.

In 1600 Shakespeare's company played before the Queen at Whitehall, and on several occasions in 1602: their last performance being at Richmond in Surrey on February 2nd, 1603. The following month the great Queen died. In 1602 Shakespeare had been buying land in the neighbourhood of Snitterfield and Welcombe from the Combes; no less than 107 acres, and in succeeding years he considerably added to it; further, in July 1605, expending £440 in the purchase of tithes. Early in September 1601, his father, John Shakespeare, had died. Seven years later, also in September, died his mother. In 1607, his eldest daughter, Susanna, married Dr. John Hall, and on the last day of the same year his brother Edmund, an actor, was buried in St. Saviour's, Southwark.

It was in 1609 that Shakespeare retired permanently to Stratford. He and his players had been honoured by the new sovereign from the very beginning of his reign; but Shakespeare now severed his active connection with the stage. In this year his famous Sonnets were published, those sugared verses addressed to his patron, the Earl of Southampton, in which he laments having

‘THE TEMPEST’

made himself “a motley to the view.” Henceforth he would be a country gentleman and dramatic author, and let who would seek the applause of the crowd. He now wrote the *Taming of the Shrew*, whose induction is permeated with local allusions; he bought more land in the neighbourhood of Stratford; he kept some degree of state at New Place. In 1611 he sold his shares in the theatres, but in 1612 bought property at Blackfriars. Thus Shakespeare passed his remaining years. As Rowe, his earliest biographer says, they were spent “as all men of good sense will wish theirs to be; in ease, retirement, and the conversation of his friends.”

His last dramatic work, *The Tempest*, was written in 1611, and bears evidences of being consciously and intentionally his last. It is easily dated, because of the references in it to the “still vex’d Bermoothes,” the Bermuda islands, which were discovered by Admiral Sir George Somers’ expedition in 1609. The “discovery” was made by the Admiral’s ship, the *Sea Venture*, being driven in a storm on the hitherto unknown islands. The disasters, the adventures, and the strange sights and sounds of the isles were described by Sylvester Jourdain, one of the survivors, in an account published October 1610, called “A Discovery of the Bermudas, otherwise called the Isle of Divels.”

Shakespearean students find a purposeful solemnity in the treatment of the play, and some perceive in the character of the magician, Prospero, a portraiture of himself, his work done, and with a foreboding of his end, oppressed with a sense of the brief span and the futility of life—

“We are such stuff
As dreams are made of, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.”

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

Thus he brings his labours to an end—

“this rough magic
I here abjure; and, when I have required
Some heavenly music, (which even now I do,)
 . . . I'll break my staff,
Bury it in certain fathoms in the earth,
And, deeper than did ever plummet sound,
I'll drown my book”

The retirement of Shakespeare rather curiously synchronises with the spread of Puritanism, that slowly accumulating yet irresistible force which, before it had expended its vigour and its wrath was destined to abolish for many years the theatre and the actor's calling, and even to behead a king and work a political revolution. The puritan leaven was working even in Stratford, and in 1602 the town council solemnly decided that stage-plays were no longer to be allowed, and that any one who permitted them in the town should be fined ten shillings. This edict apparently became a dead letter, but in 1612 it was re-enacted and the penalty raised to £10.

We may perhaps here pertinently inquire: Did Shakespeare himself become a Puritan? Probably so moderate and equable a man as he seems to have been belonged to no extreme party; but it is to be noted that Dr. John Hall, husband of his eldest daughter, was a Puritan, and that Susanna herself is described in her epitaph as “wise to salvation,” which means that she also had found the like grace.

In 1614 Shakespeare seems to have entertained a Puritan divine at New Place, according to a somewhat ambiguous account in the Stratford chamberlain's accounts, in which occurs the odd item: “One quart of sack and one quart of claret wine given to the preacher at New Place.” If we may measure his preaching by his drinking, he must have delivered poisonously long

DEATH OF SHAKESPEARE

sermons. But the town council were connoisseurs in sermons, just as the council of forty years earlier had been patrons of the drama; and they sought out and welcomed preachers, just as their forbears had done with the actors. Only these divines do not seem to have been paid for their services, except in drink. They were all thirsty men, and the council rewarded their orations with the same measure as given to the preacher at New Place.

In January 1616, William Shakespeare instructed his solicitor to draft his will. No especial reason for this settlement of his worldly affairs appears to be recorded. In February his daughter Judith was married to Thomas Quiney, vintner, son of that Richard who eighteen years earlier had sought to borrow the £30. In March he was taken ill and the draft will was amended without being fair-copied, a sign, it may be argued, of urgency. It bears date March 25th, and has three of the poet's signatures; one on each sheet. But he lingered on until April 23rd, dying on the anniversary of his birthday.

CHAPTER V

Stratford-on-Avon--It has its own life, quite apart from Shakespearean associations--Its people and its streets--Shakespeare Memorials.

STRATFORD-ON-AVON would be an extremely interesting town, both historically and scenically, even without its Shakespearean interest. It does not need association with its greatest son to stand forth easily among other towns of its size and command admiration. It is remarkably unlike the mind's eye picture formed of it by almost every stranger. You expect to see a town of very narrow streets, rather dull perhaps and with little legitimate trade, apart from the sale of picture-postcards, fancy china, guide-books, miniature reproductions of the inevitable Shakespeare bust, and the hundred-and-one small articles that tourists buy; but Stratford-on-Avon is not in the least like that. It is true that with a singular lack of humour there is a "Shakespeare Garage," while we all know that Shakespeare never owned a motor-car; that the bust is represented in mosaic over the entrance to the Old Bank, founded in 1810, upon which Shakespeare could never, therefore, have drawn a cheque; and that the Shakespeare Hotel not only bears the honoured name, but also a very large copy of the bust over its porch, and names all its rooms after the plays. Honeymoon couples, I believe, have been given the room called *Love's Labour's Lost*, and *Cymbeline*, *Midsummer Night's Dream* and many another will astonish the guest at that really very fine and ancient hotel. I forget if there be

THE STRATFORDIANS

a bedroom named after *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. If so, it must obviously be one of the double rooms mentioned in the tariff.

They gave me *As you Like It*, and it was sufficiently comfortable: I liked it much. On the other hand, *Macbeth* makes one fearful of insomnia. "Macbeth does murder sleep." Not poppy nor mandragora—well, let it be.

It is also true that the old market-house, a quaint isolated building of late eighteenth or early nineteenth century standing at the junction of Wood and Henley Streets with Bridge Street, and now a Bank, has for weather-vane the Shakespeare arms and crest of falcon and spear; and it is no less undeniable that the presiding genius of the place has his manifestations in many other directions; but all these things, together with the several antique furniture and curio shops where the unique articles—of which there is but one each in the world—you purchase to-day are infallibly replaced to-morrow, are for the benefit of the visitor, the stranger and pilgrim. "I was a stranger and ye took me in," I murmured when the absolute replica of the unmatched article I had purchased was unblushingly exposed for sale within a day or two.

The Stratfordian notices none of these—they are there, but they don't concern him. You think they do, and that if a suggestion were made that the town should be renamed "Shakespeare-on-Avon" he would adopt it and be grateful; but you would be quite wrong; he would not. If you caught a hundred Stratford people, *flagrante delicto*, in the pursuit of their daily business and haled them into the Guildhall or other convenient room and set them an examination paper on Shakespeare, no one would pass with honours. Why should any of them? They have grown up with Shakespeare;



CHAPEL STREET, STRATFORD-ON-AVON, SHOWING THE HARVARD HOUSE, THE TUDOR HOUSE, THE SHAKESPEARE HOTEL AND THE GUILD CHAPEL.

MOP FAIR

they accept him as a fact, just as they do the rising and setting of the sun and the waxing and waning of the moon; but they are not interested in him any more than they are in the courses of those luminaries. They talk of anything but Shakespeare, and I have met and spoken with many who have never been inside the Birthplace, or to Anne Hathaway's Cottage, or in the Harvard House, or indeed to any of the show-places in and about the town. They each save about half a guinea in the aggregate, but they don't do so either by way of self-denial or economy. They are simply not interested.

Stratford would lose a very great deal if the world in general were to become as indifferent to the Swan of Avon; but it would still be a prosperous market-town, dependent upon the needs of the surrounding agricultural villages. Agriculture has ever been the mainstay of Stratford, and as far as we can see, ever will be. All around in the Avon valley stretch those rich pastures that still "lard the rother's sides," and on market days there come crawling into the streets, among the cattle and the sheep, carriers' carts from many an obscure village, with curious specimens of countryfolk who have not lost the old habit of looking upon Stratford as the centre of the universe. So much the better for Stratford. "Tain't much as I waants," said one to the present writer, "an' I raekon I can get it at Stratford 'most as good as anywheer else. Besides, I du like to come to town sometimes, an' see a bit of life."

One can, in fact, see a good deal of life in the town, but the liveliest time—quite apart from the Shakespeare Festival, which is exotic and mostly for visitors—is the Mop Fair, much more familiarly known as "Stratford Mop." This annual event is held somewhat too late for the average visitor's convenience; on October 12th,

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

when the tourists have mostly gone home. It is the great hiring-fair for farm servants and others: perhaps we had better say, *was*, for the hiring has almost wholly fallen into disuse, together with the so-called "Run-away Mop," of a fortnight after, at which the servants already hired and not pleased with their bargain might re-engage.

I think the average visitor might not, after all, be pleased with Stratford Mop, which is in some ways a very barbarous affair; the chief barbarity of course being the roasting of oxen whole on the stocks, a loathly spectacle, and not one calculated to increase respect for our ancestors, whose great idea of merry-making for very special occasions was the same roasting of cattle whole and making the public conduits run wine. The last sounds better, but from the accounts preserved of the wine dispersed at such times we know that the quantity was meagre and the quality exceedingly poor.

But the vast crowds resorting to Stratford for the Mop see nothing gruesome in the spectacle. Special trains run from numerous places, and all the showmen in the country seem to have hurried up for the event.

The streets of Stratford are broad and pleasant, with a large proportion of ancient houses still left; half-timbered fronts side by side with more or less modern brick and plaster, behind which often lurks a rich old interior, unknown to the casual passer-by. Sometimes a commonplace frontage is removed, revealing unexpected beauty in an enriched half-timber framing which the odd vagaries in taste of bygone generations have caused to be thus hidden. There is in this way a speculative interest always attaching to structural alterations in the town. In this chance fashion the fine timbering of the so-called "Tudor House" was uncovered in 1903, and other instances might be given.

BRIDGE STREET

Recently, also, Nash's House has been completely refronted, in fifteenth century style, wholly in oak. In fact, we might almost declare that Stratford is now architecturally, after many years, reverting to the like of the town Shakespeare knew. And if the modernised house-fronts were systematically stripped, among them that occupied by Messrs. W. H. Smith & Son at the corner of High Street and Bridge Street, the house occupied for many years by Judith Shakespeare and her husband, Thomas Quiney, the vintner, Stratford would become greatly transformed.

But the mention of Bridge Street is a reminder that here at any rate a great change has been made. It is the widest of all the streets, and is in fact a very wilderness of width. All the winds that sport about the neighbourhood seem to have their home in Bridge Street. Your hat always blows off when you turn the corner into it, and the dust and homeless straws go wandering up and down its emptiness, seeking rest in the Avon over the Clopton Bridge, but always blown back. Now Bridge Street was not always like this. In Shakespeare's time, and until 1858, when the last of it was cleared away, a kind of island of old houses occupied part of this roadway. It was called "Middle Row." Such a collection of houses was the usual feature of old English towns. There was an example in London, in Holborn, with exactly the same name; but it disappeared somewhat earlier than its Stratford namesake. Pictures survive of this Bridge Street landmark. I think a good many Stratford people regret it, but regrets will not bring it back. We think of the irrevocable, and of Herrick's witch -

"Old Widow Prowse, to do her neighbours evil,
Has given, some say, her soul unto ye Devill;
But when sh^e 'as killed that horse, cow, pig, or hen,
What would she give to get that soul again?"

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But the Stratford folk, unlike Widow Prowse, did their spiriting with the best intentions. Unfortunately, good intentions notoriously pave the way to hot corners.

It was a very picturesque old row, with the "Swan" inn hanging out its sign; and perhaps, in these times of reconstructions, it may even yet be rebuilt, after the evidences of it that exist.

In Bridge Street is another landmark in the way of literary associations. The "Red Horse" hotel has a large, dull and uninteresting plaster front, but American visitors find the house attractive on account of Washington Irving's stay there about a hundred years ago, when he was writing of Shakespeare and Shakespeare's country. The sitting-room he occupied is kept somewhat as a shrine to his memory, and the chair he fancifully called his "throne" is still there, but you may not sit in it. It is kept under lock and key, in a cupboard with glass doors. The poker he likened to his sceptre is kept jealously in the bar. Citizens of the United States ask to see it, and it is reverently produced and unfolded from the many swathings of "Old Glory" in which it is enwrapped: "Old Glory" being, it is necessary to explain to Britishers, the United States flag, the "stars and stripes." Gazing upon it, they see that it is engraved with a dedicatory inscription by another citizen of the U.S.A.

If you proceed down Bridge Street you come presently to the Clopton Bridge that crosses the Avon, and so out of the town. The bridge is one of the many works of public utility and practical piety executed, instituted, or ordained in his will by Sir Hugh Clopton, the greatest benefactor Stratford has known. A scion of that numerous family, seated at Clopton House a mile out of the town, he went to London and prospered as a mercer, becoming Lord Mayor in 1492. Leland,

CLOPTON BRIDGE

writing in 1532, quaintly tells of him and his bridge :
"Hugh Clopton aforesaid made also the great and sumptuous Bridge upon Avon, at the East ende of the Towne, which hath 14 great Arches of stone and a long Causey made of Stone, lowe walled on each syde, at the West Ende of the Bridge. Afor the tyme of Hugh Clopton there was but a poore Bridge of Tymbre, and no Causey to come to it; whereby many poore Folkes and others refused to come to *Stratford* when Avon was up, or comminge thither, stood in jeopardye of Lyfe. The Bridge ther of late tyme," he proceeds to say, "was very smalle and ille, and at high Waters very hard to come by. Whereupon, in tyme of mynde, one Clopton a very rich Marchant and Mayr of London, as I remember, borne about *Stratforde*, having neither Wife nor Children, converted a great Peace of his Substance in good workes at *Stratford*, first making a sumptuous new Bridge and large of Stone wher in the midle be a VI great Arches for the main Streame of Avon, and at each Ende certen small Arches to bere the Causey, and so to pass commodiously at such tymes as the Ryver riseth."

The bridge was widened in 1814. I do not think that great benefactor of *Stratford* intended that tolls should be charged for passing over his bridge, but in the course of time, such charges were made, and the very large and imposing toll-house that remains shows us that it is not so very long since the bridge has been freed again.

There are many who consider the Harvard House to be the most delightful piece of ancient domestic work in the town, and it is indeed a gem. The history of it is absolutely clear. It was built in 1596 by one Thomas Rogers, alderman. His initials and those of his wife Alice, together with the date are still to be seen, carved

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on the woodwork beneath the first-floor window. The carved brackets supporting the first floor represent the Warwick Bear and Ragged Staff and the bull of the Nevilles. The bull is easily recognisable, but the bear is only to be identified after considerable study, and looks a good deal more like a pig. Katharine Rogers, daughter of the builders of this house, married Robert Harvard of Southwark, butcher, in 1605. Almost everything in Stratford pivots upon Shakespeare, or is made to do so, and it is therefore not difficult to imagine Rogers' beautiful little dwelling being erected here at the very time when Shakespeare was contemplating purchasing New Place, and the dramatist's interest in it. Rogers, being, like John Shakespeare on the town council, must have been very closely acquainted with the family. The Rev. John Harvard, son of Robert and Katharine, emigrated to the New England States of America in 1637 and died of consumption the following year, at Charleston, leaving one half of his estate, which realised £779 17s. 2d., together with his library of over 300 volumes, to a college then in contemplation; the present Harvard University at Cambridge, Massachusetts, described as the oldest and among the richest seats of learning in the United States; although the "learning" displayed there has not yet hatched out any world-shaking genius; genius being, as we who visit Stratford cannot fail to see, a quality quite independent of the academies, and springing, fully-equipped to do battle with the world, in the most unpromising places.

It is not long since the Harvard House was restored and dedicated to the public, and particularly to the use of Harvard students; in October 1909, to be precise. It had passed through various hands, and finally was offered for sale by auction. The biddings failed to



THE HARVARD HOUSE.

[Taylor, p. 42.]

SHAKESPEARE MEMORIALS

reach the reserve price and the property was withdrawn at £950. Chicago, in the person of a wealthy native of that place, came to the rescue, and it was privately bought for the purpose of converting it into a "house of call," whatever that may be, for Americans touring this district, and especially, as already noted, for students of Harvard—who obtain admission free. Other persons pay sixpence.

It is a place of very great seclusion, for Harvard students (who mostly study the more lethal forms of football and baseball nowadays) are rare; and I guess if you want to track the Americans in Stratford, you must go to the Shakespeare Hotel, anyway, or to the "Red Horse." The house was in the occupation of a firm of auctioneers and land agents until the purchase. The "restoration" of the exterior has been very carefully and conservatively done, and the interior discloses some particularly beautiful half-timbered rooms.

From time to time it seems good to amiable and well-meaning persons to set up "Shakespeare memorials" in Stratford, and it is equally amiable in the town to accept them. Thus we see in Rother Street an ornate gothic drinking-fountain and clock-tower, the "American Memorial Fountain," given in 1887 by that wealthy Shakespearean collector, George W. Childs, proprietor of the *Philadelphia Ledger*. It includes also the function of a memorial of the first Victorian Jubilee. Shakespearean quotations adorn it, including the apposite one from *Timon of Athens*: "Honest water, which ne'er left man i' th' mire."

But Shakespeare serves the turn of every man, and if you like your beer, you can set against this the equally Shakespearean quotation, "A quart of ale is a dish for a king."

The Memorial Fountain rather misses being stately,

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and it would be better if the quarter chimes of its clock did not hurry so over their business, as if they wanted life to go quicker, and time itself to be done with. Amity is the note of Mr. Childs' fountain, and the "merry songs of peace" are the subject of one of the carved quotations: that is why the British Lion and the American Eagle alternate in effigy at the angles, supporting their respective national shields of arms. The British Lion looks tame and the American Eagle is a weird fowl wearing the chastened "dearly beloved brethren" expression of a preacher at a camp meeting.

The Shakespeare Memorial by the riverside is the partial realisation of a project first considered in 1769, at the jubilee presided over by Garrick, revived in 1821 and again in '864. This was an idea for a national memorial, to include a school of acting: possibly with Shakespeare's own very excellent advice to actors, which he placed in the mouth of Hamlet, set up in gilded words of wisdom in its halls. The school for actors has not yet come into being, but at the annual festivals, when Shakespearean companies take the boards in the theatre which forms a prominent part of the Memorial, you may witness quaint new readings of the dramatist's intentions.

The great pile of buildings standing by the beautiful Bancroft gardens, in fine grounds of its own beside the river, "comprises," as auctioneers and house agents might say, the theatre aforesaid, a library, and picture gallery. It was built 1877-79 from funds raised by a Memorial Association founded by Mr. Charles E. Flower of Stratford-on-Avon, and very widely supported. The architect, W. F. Unsworth, whose name does not seem to be very generally known, has produced a very imposing, and on the whole, satisfactory composition, whose shape was largely determined by that of the



THE HARVARD HOUSE : PANEL ROOM.

[To face p. 44.

THE THEATRE

original Globe Theatre of Shakespeare's own time in Southwark. It is of red brick and stone, and a distinct ornament to the town and the riverside, although its gothic appears to have here and there a rather Continental flavour. A little more pronounced, it might seem almost Rhenish. But let us be sufficiently thankful the Memorial did not take shape in Garrick's day, when it would certainly have assumed some terrible neo-classic form. There are some particularly good and charming gargoyles over the entrance, notably that of Puck carrying that ass's head with which Bottom the Weaver was "translated," in *Midsummer Night's Dream*. A sketch of it appears on the title-page of this book. I do not think a description of the theatre, the library, or the picture gallery would serve the object of these pages, and I do not propose to describe the monument designed, executed and presented by Lord Ronald Gower, because that is done in every guide-book, and because I do not like that extremely amateurish and flagrantly-overpraised work : may the elements speedily obliterate it !

Quick-growing poplars have reached great heights since the buildings were first opened, and the Theatre and Memorial is being rapidly obscured by them. It looks its best from the Clopton Bridge, and combines with Holy Trinity church to render the town, viewed from the other side of the Avon, a place of considerable majesty and romance.

Crossing either that ancient bridge to the "Swan's Nest" inn which has become subdued to the poetry in the Stratford air and has abandoned its old name, the "Shoulder of Mutton," we may roam the meadows opposite the town. Or we may equally well cross the river by the long and narrow red brick tramway bridge, built in 1826 for the purposes of the Stratford-

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

on-Avon and Shipston-on-Stour Tramway : an ill-fated but heroic project that immediately preceded steam railways. The Great Western Railway appears to have some ownership in the bridge, and by notice threatens



HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, STRATFORD-ON-AVON.

awful penalties—something a little less than eternal punishment—to those who look upon—or cycle upon—it.

Somehow we reach those free and open meadows over against the town where the Avon runs broad and deep down to the mill and the ruined lock, just opposite the church. It is from these meadows that the accompany-

THE AVON

ing drawing of the church was taken. The breadth of the river between the Clopton Bridge and the church is exceptional, and gives a great nobility to the town. Both above and below these points it becomes much narrower, and the navigation down stream is a thing of the past. The Avon down to Binton and up beyond Charlecote is, in fact, rendered impassable by difficulties created by the Lucy family of Charlecote, and by the Earl of Warwick. Private ownership in navigable or semi-navigable streams is an ancient and complicated affair concerned with rights of fishing, of weirs and mill-leets, and other abstruse and immemorial manorial privileges, and it has furnished the lawyers with many a fat brief. It has cost the Corporation of Stratford-on-Avon £700 in recent years, in a dispute about this ruined lock and the impeded access to the river past the church and the mill, to the other decayed lock at Luddington. The Lucys gained the day, and that is why we cannot go boating down the river from Stratford.

We may cross the stream just below this point, by a footbridge, and come into the town again past the big corn-mill whose ancient ownership caused all this trouble. The present building is only about a century old, but it is the representative of the original mill that stood on this spot over a thousand years ago, and belonged then and long afterwards to the Bishops of Worcester. The exquisite humour of the manorial law ordained not only that the people of Stratford were under obligation to have their corn ground here, but that they were also made to pay for it. And as competitive millers were thus barred, there can be no doubt but that corn-milling was an expensive item. The old churchmen loved eels, useful for Friday's dish, and the Bishops of Worcester were sometimes accustomed to

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

take consignments of them in place of money payments for use of the mill.

The possibilities of the Avon in the matter of floods are very eloquently set forth on the walls of this mill: the astonishing high-water marks of floods for a century past being marked. Scanning them, it seems strange that mill and church and a good part of the town itself have not been washed away.

Passing through Old Town into Church Street, the fine Elizabethan three-gabled residence seen on the way, on the right hand, is Hall's Croft, the home of Dr. John Hall, Susanna Shakespeare's husband, before they removed to New Place following upon Shakespeare's death. The old mulberry-tree in the beautiful garden at the back of the house is said to have been planted by her.



THE NEW ORLEANS SKYLINE



CHAPTER VI

Shakespeare's Birthplace—Restoration, of sorts—The business of the Showman—The Birthplace Museum—The Shakespearean garden.

To Henley Street most visitors to Stratford-on-Avon first turn their steps; a little disappointed to discover that it is by no means the best street in the town and must have been rather a poor outskirt at the time when John Shakespeare came in from Snitterfield, to set up business in a small way. There is, as the sentimental pilgrim will very soon discover for himself, a plentiful lack of sentiment nowadays in the business of showing Shakespeare's Birthplace. For it *is* a business, and conducted as it is on extremely hard-headed lines, yields a considerable profit; a profit disposed of strictly according to the terms on which the Shakespeare's Birthplace Trust is defined in its Parliamentary powers. Enough has already been said to show the sensitive soul that his sensibilities are apt to be extremely tried when he comes this way; but then, to be sure, there can be but a small proportion of such among the 40,000 persons who annually pay their sixpences (and another to see the Birthplace Museum next door). Sometimes, when the dog-star rages and tourists most do gad about, a solid phalanx of visitors, each provided with his ticket from the office down the street, will be found lined up, waiting, like the queues outside the London theatres, for earlier arrivals to be quickly disposed of. The bloom of sentiment, as delicate as that upon a plum or peach,



SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHPLACE.

THE BIRTHPLACE

is rudely rubbed off by these things, by rules and regulations and the numbered ticket; but the very fame of Shakespeare and the increasing number of visitors who have, or think they have—or at the very least of it think they ought to have—an intelligent interest in a great man's birthplace brings about this horrid nemesis of the professional showman.

If you be a little exacting, and would keep the full freshness, the sweetest savour of hero-worship, be content not to see the Birthplace, and especially not that garden at the back of it. It was not, you know it quite well, in the least like this when John Shakespeare lived here and had his wool-store next door, where the Birthplace Museum is now, and sometimes bought and sold corn or carried on the trade of glover. The place has had so many changes of fortune, the appearance of the exterior itself has been so utterly changed and so conjecturally restored, that the thinking man loses a good deal of confidence. And the interior: the rooms without furniture or sign of habitation are like a body whence the soul has fled.

The building did not, for one thing, stand alone as it does now, the houses on either side having been pulled down after it was purchased in 1848; with the, of course, entirely admirable idea of the better lessening its risk from fire. The effect, and that of the hedges with their hairpin railings, is to give the place the very superior appearance of a private house. If old John Shakespeare could be summoned back and taken for a walk along Henley Street, he would be surprised at many things, but by none more than by the odd disappearance of every man's midden and the altered appearance of his own house. He would wonder what had become of his shop, and assume no doubt that the occupier had made his fortune and retired into private life. He would

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

not know that it is still a place of business, and among the best-paying ones in Stratford, too.

William Shakespeare succeeded to the property of his father, and in his turn willed this Henley Street dwelling-house to his sister, Joan Hart, for life. She had become a widow a few days only before his death, but herself survived until 1646. The woolshop—now the Museum part—he left to his daughter Susanna, who on the death of her aunt came into possession of all the building. At her decease, being the last descendant of her father, she willed it to Thomas Hart, the grandson of her aunt, Joan Hart. From him it descended to his brother George, who in his own lifetime gave it to his son, Shakespeare Hart, whose widow passed it on to another George Hart, nephew of her late husband. In 1778 George was gathered to his fathers and Thomas, his son, reigned in his stead; in 1793 leaving what had been the woolshop to his son John and the Birthplace to his son Thomas, who three years later made over his share to his brother John. On the death of this person in 1800 the property passed to his wife for the remainder of her life, and then to his three children, as co-partners. Since early in the eighteenth century it had been mortgaged up to the hilt, and the three partners were practically obliged to sell in 1806. Thus the last remote link with Shakespeare's kin was severed. Thomas Court, the purchaser, died in 1818, and on the death of his wife in 1847 the house was purchased by public subscription, on behalf of the nation. This transaction was completed in the following year, at a cost of £3000, the purchase being in 1866 handed over to the Corporation of Stratford-on-Avon, who held it in trust until the incorporation of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in 1891.

In all this time the structure suffered many changes, the former woolshop being opened as an inn, the

RESTORATION—OF SORTS

"Maidenhead," even in Shakespeare's own time, 1603. Later it became the "Swan and Maidenhead," and had its front new-faced with brick in 1808. Meanwhile, the Birthplace had in 1784 become a butcher's shop, hanging out the sign board "The immortal Shakespeare was born in this house." In the course of these changes the dormer windows had disappeared, about 1800, and the whole was in a very dilapidated state. The restoration work of 1857-58, renewing the vanished dormers in the roof, pulling down the brick front and reinstating a timber-framed elevation, and generally placing the building again in a weather-proof condition, cost nearly a further £3000.

Photographs scarcely give a correct impression of the exterior as thus restored. They reproduce the form, but not the true tone and quality of the timber and plaster, and in truth they make the house look better than it is. The quality of the exterior materials is not convincing and makes the house look very unauthentically new. The timbers and the plaster may be even better than they were in John Shakespeare's time, but we do not wish them to be, and there is a spruceness and a kind of parlourmaidenly neatness about the place which we feel quite sure the man who was fined for having a muck-heap in front of his house, and for not keeping his gutter clean never knew. Painted woodwork, mathematically true, and the kind of plaster facing we see here were unknown in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Roughly split oak formed both interior and exterior framing to John Shakespeare's house, and the houses of his neighbours, and it was only in Victorian times that the neatness and the soullessness expressed here became the obsession of craftsmen. In short, they do these things much more convincingly to-day at Earl's Court.

Mr. Andrew Carnegie, who is a very much greater

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person than Columbus and discovered America in the monetary sense, while Columbus only added to his geographical knowledge and not to his wealth, has also discovered Stratford-on-Avon, and has generously given the town a public library and the Trustees of the Birthplace two old cottages, all in Henley Street. At the offices you purchase tickets for the Birthplace and the



THE KITCHEN, SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHPLACE.

Birthplace Museum, and may well, before doing so, look into that public library, formed out of one of those ancient timber-framed houses Stratford is fortunate enough to possess in profusion. It is a charmingly remodelled building, very well worth inspection.

But let us to the Birthplace. At the door we are met by a caretaker. If it be late in the day he will be a little, or possibly very, husky. In any case he is hurried. He hastens us into a stone-floored room in

SHOWMEN

which a multitude of people are already waiting. They look as if they were attending an inquest, or, at the best of it, a séance, and expected every moment to be called upon to view the body, or to hear knockings or see ghostly shapes. He shuts the door. It is a solemn moment, and in the passing of it we do actually hear knockings, loud and impatient—but they are not spirits from the vasty deep: only other and impatient visitors who have paid their sixpences. But they must wait.

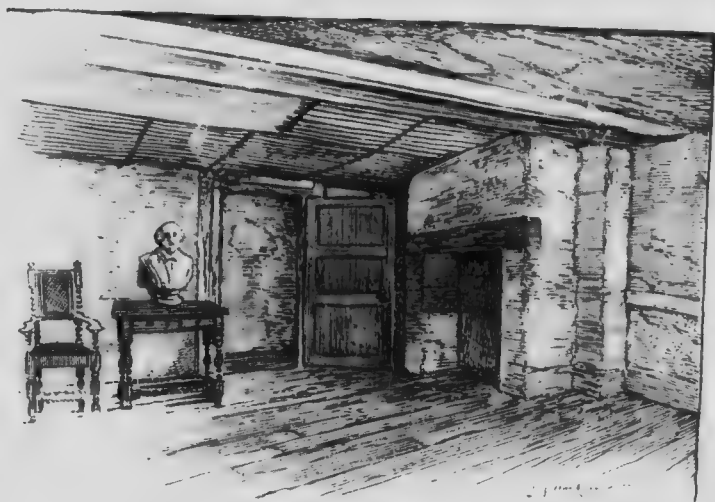
"This is the house where Shakespeare was born. You will be shown presently the actual room where he was born, upstairs."

"It became a butcher's shop afterwards, didn't it?" asks some one. The showman looks grieved: the interruption throws him out of gear, like a bent penny in a slot machine. Besides, it isn't in the programme. "You must excuse me, sir, and not keep people waiting. This was the living room. The chimney corner remains exactly as it was when Shakespeare was a boy. Have you tickets for the Museum? Those who have will go through that door to the right. This room at the back is the kitchen. If you will ascend the staircase, you will be shown the birth-room. Mind the step."

A dark steep climb, and a narrow passage leads into the former front bedroom. It is almost entirely bare, only an old chair or two and an old coffer emphasising its nakedness. The rough plaster walls and the ceiling are appallingly dirty; Mrs. Shakespeare would be thoroughly ashamed of it, if she could but revisit her home. A plaster cast of the inevitable Shakespeare bust stands in the room, sometimes on the coffer, and sometimes on a spindly-legged table, and looks with serene amusement upon the proceedings. The old person who used to show the birth-room has apparently been superseded. She used to patronise the bust, and afforded some people

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

much secret amusement. "Plenty room 'ere for the mighty brain," she would say, drawing her hand across that broad and lofty brow; "there will never be more than one Shakespeare, sir." The present attendants have less time for that kind of thing, and hurry on with their mechanical tale. Why don't the Trustees economise, and get a gramophone? "This is the room where



THE ROOM IN WHICH SHAKESPEARE WAS BORN.

Shakespeare was born. The furniture you see does not belong to his time. Some of the glass in the window is original; you can tell it by the green tint. Then laths, sir, in the ceiling? They're iron, and put up to preserve the original ceiling. No one is allowed in the room above. The ceiling and the walls, as you will observe, are covered with names. Before visitors' books were provided, visitors were invited to write their names here. You will see that they have fully availed themselves of the privilege, and those who had diamond

A YEAR'S VISITORS

rings have scratched theirs on the window-panes. Here you will see the signature of General Tom Thumb, who visited the Birthplace with his wife. His name was Stratton. Its position, not very much higher than the skirting-board, shows his height. Helen Faucit's name appears on the beam overhead. Sir Walter Scott's name, and Thomas Carlyle's will be seen on the window."

We take these and all other signatures on trust, for they are nearly every one terrible scrawls, and are all so extremely crowded together, and the plaster is so dirty, and the glass so nearly opaque that with this and with that they are hardly ever legible.

In a back room hangs an oil portrait of Shakespeare : the so-called " Stratford " portrait, bought in 1860 by William Hunt, the town clerk, together with the old house in which it then hung. It has been cleaned and restored and elaborately framed, and it will be observed that it is further guarded by being enclosed in a steel safe : extraordinary precautions in behalf of a work which is almost certainly spurious.

And so we descend and sign the visitors'-book. A very bulky volume is filled in less than a year, and still the number grows. There were 27,038 visitors in 1896, and 49,117 in 1910. The extremely fine and lengthy summer of 1911 did not, as might have been supposed, bring a record return. On the contrary, the numbers fell in that year to 40,300.

Returning to the kitchen, where in the yawning chimney-place a bacon cupboard will be noticed, we leave by the garden at the back. But meanwhile the Birthplace Museum has been left undescribed. Visitors who have sprung a sixpence for that are taken through from the front room, the living-room. Here are kept many and various articles more or less associated with Shakespeare, and some that have no connection with

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

him at all. The most interesting are the documents relating to this house; the original letter written by Richard Quiney to Shakespeare in 1598; and a deed with the signature of Shakespeare's brother Gilbert, who was a draper or haberdasher in London, dated 1609. A desk from the Grammar School, the chair from the "Falcon" at Bidford, in which Shakespeare is supposed to have sat, portraits, prints: a perfect copy of the 1623 First Folio edition of the plays, purchased at the Ashburnham Sale in 1898, and other rare editions, make up the collection, together with a sword said to have been



SHAKESPEARE'S
SIGNET-RING.

Shakespeare's, and an interesting gold signet-ring, with the initials "W.S." entwined with a true-lover's knot, found in a field outside the town, near the church, early in the nineteenth century. It is said to have been Shakespeare's ring, but scarcely sufficient stress seems to be laid upon the undoubted authenticity of it. Shakespeare's will, drafted in

January 1616, originally bore the concluding words: "In witness whereof I have hereunto put my scale," but this was afterwards altered to "hand," the assumption being that it was the loss of this signet ring which necessitated the alteration.

Haydon, the painter, wrote to Keats in 1818, about the discovery, "My dear Keats, I shall go mad! In a field at Stratford-on-Avon, that belonged to Shakespeare, they have found a gold ring and seal with the initials 'W.S.' and a true-lover's knot between. If this is not Shakespeare's whose is it? I saw an impression to-day, and am to have one as soon as possible: as sure as you live and breathe, and that he was the first of beings, the seal belonged to him, O, Lord!"

THE SHAKESPEAREAN GARDEN

Among the exhibits in the Museum are the town weights and measures, the sword of state, and altogether some fine miscellaneous feeding for the curio-fancier.

The cellars under the building are not shown, nor is the western part of it, where the town archives are stored.

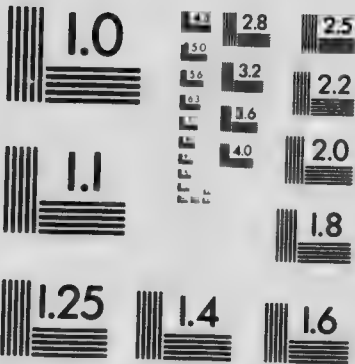
The garden at the back is laid out in beds planted with the flowers mentioned by Shakespeare in his works, and in the middle of the well-kept gravelled path is the base of the ancient town cross which formerly stood at the intersection of Bridge Street and High Street. It is a pleasant place, and its present condition is the result of care, the outcome of much pious thought. But we may declare with all the emphatic language at our command, that when William Shakespeare and his brothers Gilbert, Richard and Edmund, and his sister Joan played out here in the back yard, it was very little of a garden, and not at all tidy unless they were angel-children, which we have no occasion to suppose. It seems to have been originally an orchard, but no doubt Mr. John Shakespeare put it to some use in connection with the several trades he followed.

The piety is undoubted, but it is a little overdone, and everything is in sample. They are not very good specimens of marigolds we see here, but still they are obviously marigolds, and we do not—no really we don't—need the label that identifies them and the other flowers. We can quite easily recognise the winking Mary-bud, that beautiful flower whose golden eyes are among the loveliest blossoms in an old-fashioned garden; we know the rose, the jasmine, the gillyflower, the sunflower, the stock, the ladysmock, and the whole delightful posy, and wonder who and what those folk may be who cannot recognise them, and require these cast-iron labels for their information.



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CHAPTER VII

Church Street—The "Castle" inn—The Guild Chapel, Guild Hall,
and Grammar School—New Place.

CHURCH STREET is the most likeable of all the streets of Stratford. There you do not, in point of fact, actually see the church, which is out away beyond the end of it. The features of this quiet and yet not dull thoroughfare are the few and scattered shops in among private houses, and a quaint old inn of unusual design, the "Windmill." It is illustrated here, and so the effective frontage, with its row of singularly bold dormer windows need not be more particularly described. The interior is almost equally interesting, and has a deep ingle-nook with one of those bacon-cupboards that are so numerous found in the town and district. It is a house that attracts and holds the observant man's attention, and it has been so greatly admired by an American visitor that a complete set of architectural drawings was made for him and an exact replica built in Chicago a few years ago.

Opposite the "Windmill" inn is a fine Georgian mansion called "Mason Croft," obviously once occupied by a person of importance, many years since. But the chief feature of Church Street is the long range of half-timbered buildings with its striking row of massive chimney-stacks, ending with the imposing stone tower of the Guild Chapel. It is entirely right that these buildings should bulk so largely to the eye, for in them is centred the greater part of Stratford's history. They are the time-worn and venerable buildings of that ancient Guild of

THE GUILD

Holy Cross whose beginnings are in the dim past and have never been definitely fixed. The earliest facts relating to the Guild take the story of it back to 1269, when its first Chapel was begun, and when the semi-religious character of the fraternity was its more important half. The Guild may be likened to a mutual benefit society



THE "WINDMILL" INN.

of modern times, with the addition of the religious element. It was founded in superstition, but lived that down and became not only an institution of the greatest service, but also the originator of the Grammar School, and an informal town council and local authority, which, strangely enough, in its later and almost wholly secularised character, withstood the exactions of the Bishops of Worcester, the old-time lords of the manor and their stewards, and finally, after being dissolved in

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

1547, was re-constituted as the town council of the newly incorporated borough in 1553.

The original form of the Guild was that of a subscription society for men and women. Its benefits, unlike those of the Foresters and the Oddfellows of to-day, were chiefly spiritual. It employed priests to look after the religious needs of its members during life and to pray for the health of their souls after death. It secured these then greatly desired benefits at a reduced rate, just as the modern benefit society employs the club doctor. It also in many ways promoted kindness and good-fellowship, helped the poor, and often found husbands for unappropriated spinsters by the simple process of endowing them. This was all to the good. Somewhat later the Guild espoused the cause of education, and certainly had a grammar school at the close of the fourteenth century, payments to the schoolmaster being the subject of allusion in the Guild's archives in 1402. Once a year the entire membership went in stately procession to church, and returning to the Guild Hall indulged in one of those gargantuan feasts whose records are the amazement of modern readers. Of the 103 pullets, and of the geese and the beef recorded to have been consumed at one of these feasts in the beginning of the fifteenth century we say nothing, but on the same occasion they drank "34 gallons of good beer," and "39 gallons of small ale," perhaps on the well-known old principle that "good eating deserveth good drinking." The 73 gallons of ale not being enough they sent out and had some more in by the cistern, a method which seems determined and heroic. The account thus includes "1 cestern of penyale," for which they paid the equivalent of eight shillings, and "2 cesterns of good beer bought from Agnes Iremonger for 3s."; that is to say, about twenty-four shillings' worth. They seem

THE GUILD

to have had enough, "'Tis merry in hall when beards wag all," and there can be no doubt that the company who on this occasion drank pottle-deep were merry enough.

The Guild also added morality plays to its entertainments; but all these lively proceedings formed but one side to its activities. It fulfilled many of the functions of local government, and strictly too, and its aldermen and proctors were officials not likely to be disregarded. The authority of the Guild was supported by its wealth, contributed by the benefactions of the members, which rendered it in course of time, after the lord of the manor, the largest landowner in and about the town.

It was not so great a change when the old Guild was reconstructed and became the town council. By that time it had ceased its early care for the future of its members' souls, and had become in some of its developments much more like a Chamber of Commerce. But it had not forgotten to make merry and its love-feasts continued, and its morality plays with them, although they had become a little more after the secular model.

These traditions were continued into the town council, as they could scarcely fail to be, for the members of that body had been also officials of the Guild. John Shakespeare, High Bailiff in 1539, was responsible for inviting a company of actors to perform in the Guild Hall, and others did the like.

The Guild Chapel, founded in 1296 and largely rebuilt by the generosity of Sir Hugh Clopton in the fifteenth century, is the chief of the Guild's old buildings. It is not now of much practical use, but of venerable aspect and considerable beauty. The tower, porch and nave are Clopton's work, the beautiful porch still displaying his shield of arms and that of the City of London, although

S MMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

greatly weathered and defaced. He did not touch the chancel, which had already been restored; and the exterior still shows by force of contrast the greatness of Clopton's gift; his nave entirely overshadowing in its comparative bulk the humble proportions of the chancel. Frankness is at least as desirable a quality in a book as in the affairs of life, and so it may at once be admitted that the interior of the Guild Chapel is extremely disappointing. It is coldly whitewashed, and the ancient frescoes discovered a hundred years ago have faded away. They included a fine, if alarming to some minds, representation of the doom, a fifteenth-century notion of the Judgment Day. Alarming to some minds because of the very high percentage of the damned disclosed at this awful balancing of accounts. Illustrations of this, among the other frescoes, survive, and have a fearful interest. It is pleasing to see the towering mansions of the Blest on the left hand, with St. Peter waiting at the open door welcoming that, ah! so small band; but on the right, where green, pink and blue pig-faced devils with asses' ears are tormenting their prey, whanging them with bludgeons and raking them in with three-pronged prokers, casting them into Hell's Mouth, and finally roasting them in a furnace, the prospect is vile. Shakespeare must have been perfectly familiar with these horrific things, and Falstaff's likening of a flea on Bardolph's fiery nose to a "black soul burning in hell fire," looks very like a vivid recollection of them. Some day, perhaps, when the Shakespearean cult at Stratford is more advanced (it is only in its youth yet) these frescoes will be renewed, from the careful records of them that have been kept.

The lengthy line of the Guild Hall and the almshouses of the Guild is one of the most effective things in the town. It dates from 1417. For many years, until 1894,



THE GUILD CHAPEL, GUILD HALL, GRAMMAR SCHOOL, AND ALMSHOUSES.

J. Moore

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

the stout timbering was hidden away beneath plaster, and few suspected the simple beauty of the honest old oak framing hidden beneath. The plaster was spread over it to *preserve the oak from the weather*. Let us italicise that choice specimen of stupidity, not because it is unique or even rare, for it is found all over the country, and elsewhere in this very town of Stratford, and here and everywhere else it is at last being found out; but because the italics are needed somewhere, to drive home the peculiar dunderheadedness of it. I think perhaps, after all, plaster was coated over old timbering, not so much for the preservation of it as because generations had been born who could not endure the uneven lines of the old work. The woodwork of those later heirs of time was true to a hair's breadth and planed down to an orderly smoothness: not riven anyhow from the logs. A conflict of ideals had arisen, and the new era was ashamed of the handiwork of the old.

There have been times when architects were also ashamed of their chimneys, and disguised them and hid them away, as though a chimney were an unnatural thing for a house and to be abated and apologised for. The only time to apologise for a chimney is when it smokes inside the house instead of out; and it is pleasant to see that whoever designed and built the long and lofty range of chimneys that rises, almost like a series of towers, from this roof ridge, had not the least idea of excusing them.

The hall of the Guild occupies almost half the length of the lower floor. The remainder forms the almshouses formerly occupied by the poorer brethren of the Guild and still housing the pensioners enjoying their share of the Clopton benefactions. They wear on the right arm a silver badge displaying the Clopton cross,

THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

a cross heraldically described as a "cross pattée fitchée at foot."

The interior of the Guild Hall displays firstly that long ground-floor hall in which the Guild members met and feasted or transacted business, and where their morality plays and the entertainments given by their successors, the earlier town councils, were acted. Here such travelling companies as those who called themselves "the Earl of Leicester's servants," and other troupes of actors, occasionally performed. Shakespeare as a boy must have seen them, and thus probably had his attention first directed to the stage as a career.

From this long hall the room variously styled the "Armoury," or the small Council Chamber or "Greeting Room," is entered. This Agreeing Room, perhaps for the inner councils of the Guild, was re-panelled about 1619, when the door leading from the hall was banded; and as a sign of rejoicing, the royal arms were painted over the fireplace at the time of the Restoration of Charles the Second, in 1660. Here also at one time the arms of the town guard were kept.

The present School Library, overhead, occupies the room under the roof, formerly the large Council Chamber of the Guild. The heraldic white and red roses painted on the west wall, the red countercharged with a white centre and the white with red, were placed there in 1485, marking the satisfaction of the townsfolk at the marriage of Henry the Seventh with Elizabeth of York, and the union of the rival Houses of York and Lancaster.

Out of this room opens the Latin Schoolroom of the Grammar School. The first portion of it was once separate, and known as the Mathematical Room. Here we are on the scene of Shakespeare's schooldays, the schoolroom where he learnt that "small Latin and less Greek," with which Ben Jonson credited him; a room

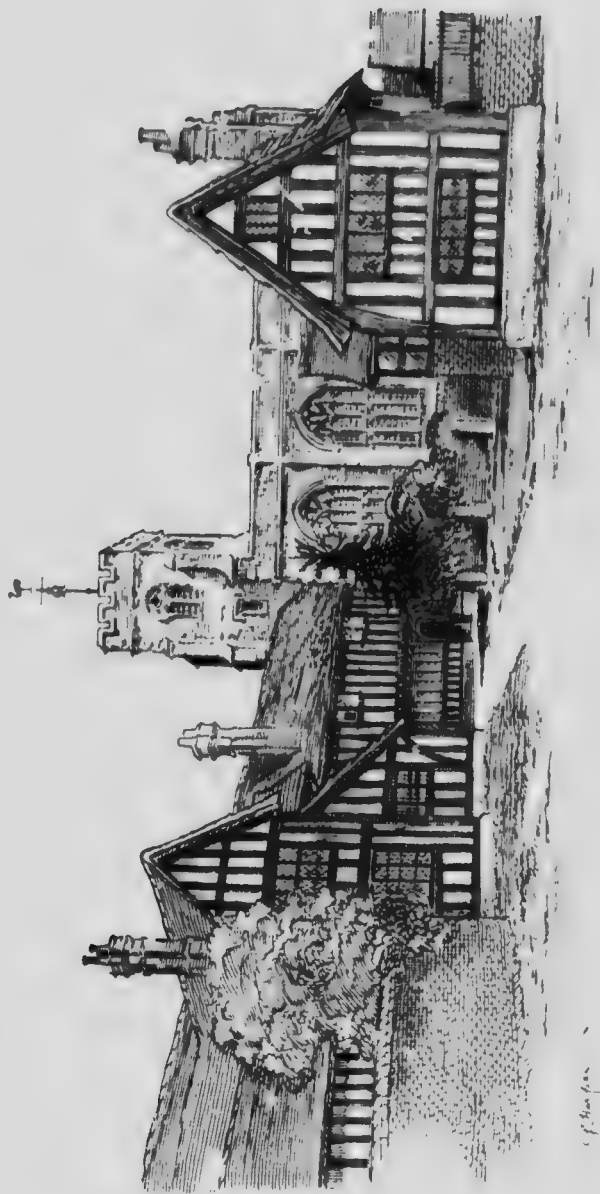
SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

still used in the education of Stratford boys. He pictured the schoolboy of his own and every other time in the lines—

“The whining schoolboy, with his satchel
And whining morning face, creeping like a snail
Unwillingly to school.”

How unwillingly we do not fully comprehend until we look more closely into the schooling of those days. It was a twelve-hour day, begun extremely early in the morning, and continued through the weary hours with some exercise of the rod.

We know exactly who were the masters of the Grammar School in the years 1571 to 1580, when Shakespeare received his education here, in common with the other children of the town. They were Walter Roche, who was a Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and afterwards rector of Clifford Chambers; succeeded in 1572 by Thomas Hunt, afterwards curate-in-charge at Luddington; and in 1577 by Thomas Jenkins, of St. John's College, Oxford. These may have been pedants, but they were scholars, and qualified to impart an excellent education. They were in fact men distinctly above the average of the schoolmasters of that age, and live for all time in the characters of Holofernes in *Love's Labour's Lost* and Sir Hugh Evans in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*; the title “Sir,” being one, not of knighthood, but of courtesy, given to a clergyman. Shakespeare's allusions to schools, masters and scholars, and his Latin conversations in the plays, modelled on the school methods then in vogue, are much more numerous and illuminative than generally supposed. We find, indeed, an especially intimate touch with Shakespeare's schooldays in the description of Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* as “like a pedant that keeps school i' the



THE SCHOOLMASTER'S HOUSE AND GUILD CHAPEL.

W. H. W.

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

church"; a remark whose significance is not evident until we read that during Shakespeare's own schooldays the buildings were extensively repaired and that for a time the master and pupils were housed in the Guild Chapel.

The Latin Schoolroom has an outside staircase built in recent years to replace the original, abolished in 1841. The half-timbered house standing in the courtyard was formerly the schoolmaster's residence; it is now, with the need for accommodating the natural increase of scholars, used for additional class-rooms.

Shakespeare, retiring early from his interests in London and the playhouses, and coming home to Stratford a wealthy man, hoping to live many years in the enjoyment of his fortune, settled in the old mansion he had bought, adjoining the scene of his own schooldays. He must have looked with a kindly eye and with much satisfaction from the windows of New Place, upon the schoolboys coming and going along the street, as he himself had done. Not every one can be so fortunate. Perhaps the reigning schoolmaster of the time even held up the shining example of Mr. William Shakespeare, "who was a schoolboy like you, my boys," to his classes, and carefully omitting the factors of chance and opportunity, promised them as great success if they did but mind their books. Perhaps, on the other hand—for these were already puritan times—their distinguished neighbour was an awful example: author of those shocking exhibitions called stage-plays, at this time forbidden in the town, under penalties, and an actor, "such as those rogues whom we but the other day sent packing from our streets. Beware, my lads, lest you become wealthy after the fashion of Mr. Shakespeare. 'What profiteth it a man, if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul?'"



THE HEAD MASTER'S DESK, STRATFORD-ON-AVON GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

UNSAVOURY OLD STRATFORD

Shakespeare, although he had become a personage of great consideration, with a fine residence, many times removed from his father's humble house in Henley Street, had not changed into a more salubrious neighbourhood. The Stratford of his day and for long after was a dirty and insanitary place, according to our notions, but the townsfolk did not seem to be troubled by these conditions, and it never occurred to them that the plagues and fevers that carried off many of their fellows to Heaven—or whatever their destination—untimely were caused by the dirt and the vile odours of the place. Stratford of course, was not singular in this, and had its counterpart in most other towns and villages of that age. The town council, however, drew the line at the burgesses keeping pigs in part of the houses, or allowing them to wander in the streets; and enacted a fine of fourpence for every strayed porker. But the townsfolk regarded the authority's dislike of pigs as a curious eccentricity, and the swine had their styres and roamed the streets exactly as before. The biggest of the six municipal muckhills that raised their majestic crests in the streets all the year round was situated in Chapel Lane, opposite Shakespeare's door, but there is no record of his having objected to it. It was this, however, and the deplorable condition of Chapel Lane in general, then notoriously the dirtiest thoroughfare in the town, which probably caused the poet's death; for the opinion now generally held is that he died of typhoid fever.

Down Chapel Lane then ran an open gutter: a wide and dirty ditch some four or five feet across, choked with mud. All the filth of this part of the town ran into it and discharged into the river.

There is no pictorial record of New Place, as it was when Shakespeare resided in it. He was unfortunate

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

in living long before the age of picture-postcards, and never knew the joy of seeing illustrations of his house, "New Place; residence of Mr. William Shakespeare" (with the tell-tale legend "Printed in Germany," in ruby type on the back), for sale in all the shop windows. Poor devil!

New Place passed by Shakespeare's will to his daughter Susanna and her husband Dr. Hall. They removed from their house "Hall's Croft," Old Stratford, shortly afterwards, Shakespeare's widow probably living with them until her death in 1623. Dr. Hall died in 1635. In 1643, Mrs. Hall here entertained Queen Henrietta Maria for three weeks, at the beginning of the royalist troubles, when the Queen came to the town with 5000 men. In 1649 she died, two years after her son-in-law, Thomas Nash, whose house is next door. Somewhere about this time all the Shakespeare books and manuscripts would seem to have disappeared. The puritan Dr. Hall, disapproved of stage-plays, and his wife, Shakespeare's daughter Susanna, could neither write nor read; and thus the complete destruction of the dramatist's records is easily accounted for.

Nash's widow, Shakespeare's granddaughter, married again, a John Barnard who was afterwards knighted. Lady Barnard died childless at her husband's place at Abington, Northamptonshire, and was buried there, leaving New Place to her husband, who died four years later, in 1674. By a strange chance, the house that had been sold out of the Clopton family now came back to it by marriage, Sir Edward Walker who bought the property in 1675, leaving Barbara, an only child, who married Sir John Clopton. His son, Sir Hugh, came into possession of an entirely new-fronted house, for his father, careless of its associations, in 1703 had made great alterations here. Illustrations of this frontage

A BLACK-TEMPERED PARSON

which survived until 1759, show that it was not at all Shakespearean; being instead most distinctly and flagrantly Queen Annean, in the semi-classic taste of that day, with a pediment and other architectural details which we are convinced Shakespeare's New Place never included.

The ill-tempered Rev. Francis Gastrell who bought New Place in 1753 completed the obliteration of the illustrious owner's residence. There cannot, happily, be many people so black-tempered as this wealthy absentee vicar of Frodsham, in Cheshire, who, resident for the greater part of the year in Lichfield, yet found Stratford desirable at some time in the twelve months. His acrid humours were early stirred. He had no sooner moved in than he found numbers of people coming every day to see Shakespeare's mulberry-tree in the garden, so he promptly had it cut down, to save himself annoyance. Then he objected to the house being assessed for taxes all the year round, although he occupied it only a month or two in the twelve; and when the authorities refused to accept his view, he had the place entirely demolished. Thus perished New Place. The site of it, after passing through several hands, was finally purchased, together with the adjoining Thomas Nash's house, by public subscription in 1861; and both are now the property of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

The site of New Place is open to the view of all who pass along Church Street and Chapel Lane, a dwarf wall with ornamental railing alone dividing it and its gardens from the pavement. Sixpence, which is the key that unlocks many doors in Shakespeare land, admits to the foundations, all that remain of the house, and also to the "New Place Museum," in the house of Thomas Nash. Strange to say, the Trustees do not charge for

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

admission to the gardens. Is this an oversight, or a kindly wish to leave the stranger an odd sixpence to get home with? Nash's house, odiously re-fronted about the beginning of the nineteenth century, showed a stuccoed front with pillared portico to the street until recently. This year (1912) the alterations have been completed by which the frontage is restored by the evidence of old prints to its appearance in Nash's time. The interior remains as of old. Among the relics in the Museum are chairs, tables, a writing-desk, and other articles rather doubtfully said to have belonged to Shakespeare; a trinket-box supposed to have been Anne Hathaway's, and an old shuffle-board from the "Falcon" inn opposite, on which Shakespeare is said to have played a game with friends at nights, when he felt bored at home. Unfortunately for tradition and the authenticity of this "Shakespearean relic," the "Falcon" was a private house in Shakespeare's lifetime, and for long after. It is known to have become an inn only at some time between 1645 and 1668. The sign was chosen probably in allusion to the Shakespeare crest. Reproductions of portraits of Shakespeare's friends complete the collections in Nash's House.

CHAPTER VIII

The Church of the Holy Trinity, Stratford-on-Avon.

THE parish church of Stratford-on-Avon is a building larger, more lofty, and far more stately than most towns of this size can boast. There is reason for this exceptional importance, first in the patronage of the Bishops of Worcester, on whose manor it was situated, but chiefly in the benefactions of John of Stratford, one of three remarkable persons born here in the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries. John, Robert, and Ralph, who took their distinguishing name from the town of their birth, were all of one family; the first two were brothers, the third was their nephew. John, born in the closing years of the thirteenth century, became successively Bishop of Winchester and Archbishop of Canterbury, and was, like most of the great prelates of the age, a statesman as well, filling the State offices of ambassador to foreign powers and Lord Chancellor of the realm. He died in 1348. His brother Robert early became rector of Stratford-on-Avon, in 1319. He it was who first caused the town to be paved; not, of course, with pavements that would meet the approval of a modern town council or the inhabitants, but probably with something in the nature of cobbles roughly laid down in the deep mud in which, up to that time, the rude carts of the age had foundered. It was this mud that set a deep gulf between neighbours, and had led indirectly to the establishment in 1296 of the original Guild Chapel, a small building which stood on the site of the

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

existing larger structure. It was founded by Robert, the father of John and Robert, largely for the spiritual welfare of those old or infirm persons who were not able to attend service at the parish church, by reason of the distance! Not, we may be sure, the distance of actual measurement, for the church is at the end of the not very long street, and a leisurely walk brings you to it in two minutes; but a distance of miles reckoned in the hindrances and disabilities provided by the roads of that age. Nothing in the story of Stratford could more eloquently describe to us the condition of its streets and the then remoteness of the Old Town district.

But to return to Robert of Stratford, who eventually became Bishop of Chichester and died in 1362. He it was who supervised his brother John's gifts to the church, which was then an incomplete building, languishing for want of means to complete it. Apparently it had long before been decided to replace the small original Norman church with a larger and much more ambitious building, in the Early English style, judging from traces of both those architectural periods discernable in the tower; but the Bishops of Worcester would not loosen their purse-strings sufficiently, and awaited the coming of that benefactor who, they were morally certain, was sure to appear sooner or later and compound with Heaven for his evil courses on earth by completing it. They did not, however, reckon on any of their own cloth doing so, for sheer joy of the work.

John of Stratford's works included the widening of the north aisle and the rebuilding of the south; the remodelling of the central tower and the addition of a timber spire, which remained until the eighteenth century, when it was replaced (1764) by the present loftier stone spire, which rises eighty-three feet above the roof of the tower. In 1332 he founded the chantry chapel of

INTERCESSION UNLIMITED

St. Thomas the Martyr in the church. There five priests were appointed to sing masses "for ever," for the good of the souls of founder and friends. John of Stratford was a great and wise man, but he did not know that "where the tree falls, there shall it lie"; nor could he foresee that his "for ever" would be commuted by the Reformation into a period of two hundred years.

He endowed his chantry chapel with liberality; almost extravagance, and even purchased the advowson of the church from the Bishop. This extremely liberal endowment was perhaps necessary, for he had considered the eternal welfare of a good many people besides himself and his relations, and included even the sovereigns of England, present and to be, and all future Bishops of Worcester. The priests, therefore, had their hands full, and shouldered some heavy responsibilities; for—not to go into individual cases, or specify some of the shocking examples—it does not need much imagination to perceive that a tremendous deal of intercession would be necessary for so unlimited a company : this. Perhaps, in the circumstances, he could not possibly endow his chantry too richly.

I do not know how his priests fared for lodgings. He seems to have omitted that important detail. But his nephew Ralph supplied the omission, and, in 1351, three years after his uncle's death, built a house for them adjoining the churchyard. It was styled then and for centuries afterwards "the College." Thus the church of Stratford-on-Avon became more richly endowed than the usual parish church, and was known as "collegiate."

Many worthy folk followed the precedent set by the founder, and added to the beauties of the church; chief among them Thomas Balsall, Warden of the College in the second half of the fifteenth century, who built the present choir or chancel between the years 1465-1490.

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

The last beautifier and benefactor was Dean Balsall's successor, Ralph Collingwood. His is the north porch of the church, and he undertook and completed an important alteration in the nave; unroofing it, removing the low Decorated clerestory, probably of circular windows, and taking down the walls to the crown of the nave-arcades; then building upon them the light and lofty clerestory we see at this day. He added choir-boys to the establishment, and further endowed the College, for their maintenance. These were the last works in the long history of the church. In 1547 the Reformation came and swept away John of Stratford's chantry and confiscated the endowments. The priests were scattered, and four years later their College was given by the king to John Dudley, the newly-created Earl of Warwick and lord of the manor in succession to the Bishops of Worcester. The College reverted to the Crown, and in 1576 it was let by Queen Elizabeth to one Richard Coningsby, who in turn let it to John Combe. It was a fine and picturesque residence, familiar enough to Shakespeare, who was on intimate terms with Combe, and received from him a bequest of £5 on his death in 1614. It was demolished in 1799.

The church is approached through the churchyard by a fine avenue of lime-trees leading up to the north porch, where a verger, or some such creature, habited in a hermaphrodite kind of garment, which is neither exactly clerical nor lay, waits for the visitor's sixpences; for you may not enter for nothing, unless perhaps at times of divine service, and even then are allowed but grudgingly by these clerical *entrepreneurs*, who suspect you have come not so much for worship as with the idea of depriving them of a sixpence. I think, however, you would find it difficult to glimpse the chancel and the Shakespeare monument before the intention would be

STRATFORD CHURCH

suspected and the enterprising person successfully headed off.

We will first encircle the exterior, where the many gravestones of departed Stratford worthies lean at every imaginable angle, the oldest of them, almost, or perhaps absolutely, contemporary with Shakespeare, grown or growing undecipherable. Some day Stratford will be sorry for neglecting them and their possible interest in the comparative study of Shakespeare and his fellow-townsmen. But everything connected, either intimately or remotely, with him has always been neglected until the record has almost perished. It is the singular fate of Shakespearean associations.

The exterior of the fabric, it will soon be noticed, is greatly weathered; more particularly the Perpendicular chancel, which must at no distant date be restored. It is surprising, and an excellent tribute to the security of the foundations of this work, built on the banks of the river over four hundred years ago, that its walls have not fallen seriously out of plumb, like that of the north nave-arcade; especially when the rather daring slightness of the design is considered, consisting of vast mullioned and transomed windows with but little wall-space between. The gargoyles leering down from the dripstones are a weird series of bat-winged creatures of nightmare-land. On the south side, however, is a very good Bear and Ragged Staff gargoyle, and next it, going westward, a nondescript Falstaffian monster, his legs amputated by time and weather.

The churchyard wall goes sheer down into the water of the Avon. The elms look down upon the stream, the rooks hold noisy parliaments in their boughs, and the swans float stately by.

Entering by the roomy north porch, where the person with the bisexual garments will take your sixpence and

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

sell you picture-postcards, it is noticed that the good Late Perpendicular stone panelling is obscured, and the effect destroyed, by the extreme licence given in the placing of monumental tablets on the walls; a practice, judging from the dates upon them, still in existence. It is quite clear from this that the building might well be in better hands. A very fine brazen knocker with



ANCIENT KNOCKER, STRATFORD-ON-AVON CHURCH.

grotesque head holding the ring in its mouth is a feature of the doorway. Although affixed to late fifteenth-century wood-work, the knocker would seem really to be nearly two hundred years earlier. It appears on picture-cards without number as the "Sanctuary Knocker," and metal reproductions of it are to be had in the town; but there is nothing to show that this church was ever one of those that owned the privilege of sanctuary. In the inexact modern way, every curious old knocker on church doors is "sanctuary"; but in reality the ancient privilege was too valuable to be

THE OLD REGISTERS

granted with the indiscriminate freedom this would argue.

Immediately within the church is seen the old register-book in a glass case, containing the entries recording the baptism and burial of Shakespeare, with the broken bow of the old font at which he was baptised. Many years ago it was removed from the church, to make room for a new, and lay neglected in a garden in the town. It has been re-lined with lead, and is used for baptisms, on request.

From the west end of the nave, where these relics are placed, the long view eastward shows this to be a very striking example of those churches whose chancels are not on the same axis with the rest of the building. The chancel in this instance inclines very markedly to the north. The symbolism of this feature in ancient churches is still matter for dispute; and it is really doubtful if it is symbolical and not the product of inexact planning, or caused by some old local conditions of the site which do not now appear; or whether it was thought to produce some acoustical advantages. It is thought that no example can be adduced of an inclination southwards, and that, therefore, the feature is a designed one. The favourite interpretation is that it repeats the inclination of the Saviour's head upon the Cross.

Advancing up the nave, it will soon be noticed that the north nave-arcade is greatly out of plumb, and leans outwards; a result, no doubt of Collingwood's alterations and additions placing too heavy a weight upon it.

At the east end of the north aisle is the former Lady Chapel, now and for long past known as the Clopton Chapel, from the tombs of that family placed there. No structural difference, no variation in the plan of the church, marks the chapel from the rest of the building, from which it is screened very slightly by a low pierced

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

railing on one side, and on the south, looking into the nave, by the ornate stone screen erected by Sir Hugh Clopton, the founder of the family chapel and architect of his own fortunes. It is a part of the tomb intended for himself, and there can be no doubt but that he saw it rising to completion with the satisfaction of a man assured of being not only wealthy, but hoping to live in fame as the benefactor of his native town, for which he did so much.

The screen is crested with elaborate pierced conventional Tudor foliage, and fronted with his arms, and with those of the City of London, the Grocers' Company, and the Merchants of the Staple. The brass inscribed plates have long since been torn away, and the tomb is entirely without inscription or effigy; as perhaps it is well it should be, for, in spite of all these elaborate preparations, and although directing that he should lie here, Sir Hugh Clopton was, after all, buried in the City of London, where he had made his fortune, and of which he was Lord Mayor in 1492, and in which he died in 1496. The church of St. Margaret, Lothbury, where he was buried, perished in the Great Fire of London, one hundred and seventy years later.

Sir Hugh Clopton died a bachelor, and the other tombs are those of his brother's descendants. That of William Clopton, who died in 1592 and is described simply as "Esquire," stands against the north wall of the Chapel. He was great-nephew of Sir Hugh. He is represented in armour, and his wife, who followed him four years later, lies beside him in effigy, both figures with prayerfully raised hands. Above them, on the wall, quite by themselves, are represented the interesting family of this worthy pair, seven in all, sculptured and painted in miniature, in the likeness of so many big-headed Dutch dolls, with the name of each

THE CLOPTON TOMBS

duly inscribed; Elizabeth, Lodowicke, Joyce, Margaret, William, Anne, and again William, the first of that name having died an infant, as did also Elizabeth and Lodowicke. These three are represented as little mummy-like creatures, swathed tightly in linen folds.

But the most gorgeous of all the Clopton tombs is the next in order of date. This is the lofty and extremely elaborate and costly monument of George Carew, Earl of Totnes and Baron Clopton, who married Joyce, eldest daughter of the already mentioned William Clopton. He died in 1629, and his wife in 1636. This costly memorial, together with that to her father and mother, was her handiwork, and she seems to have completely enjoyed herself in the progress of the commission. The Countess of Totnes and her husband are represented in full-length, recumbent effigies, sculptured in alabaster. The Earl is shown in armour and his wife is seen habited in a white fur robe, coloured red outside. A deep ruff is round her neck, and she wears a coronet. The Earl of Totnes was Master of the Ordnance to James the First; hence the symbolical sculptured implements of war in front of the monument; including two cannon, two kegs of powder and a pile of shot; one mortar, a gun, some halberds and a flag.

A later inscription records that Sir John Clopton caused these tombs to be repaired and beautified in 1714. In 1719 he died, aged 80; and in course of time his own tomb became a candidate for repair. No Cloptons then survived to perform that pious office, which was observed by Sir Arthur Hodgson, the owner of Clopton House, in 1892.

The monument of Sir Edward Walker, who died in 1676, is the memorial of a man who held some important positions. He was Charles the First's Secretary of War, and afterwards Garter King-of-Arms and military

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editor of Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion*. He has some interest for the students of Shakespeare's life, for it was he who bought New Place in 1675.

There are some smaller tablets on the walls, including one with a little effigy of a certain Amy Smith, who was for forty years "waiting-gentlewoman" to the Countess of Totnes. She is seen devoutly kneeling at a *prie-Dieu* chair.

CHAPTER IX

The Church of the Holy Trinity, Stratford-on-Avon (*continued*)—The Shakespeare grave and monument.

WE now pass beneath the arches of the central tower, under the organ and past the transepts, into the chancel. The chief interest is, quite frankly, the Shakespeare monument and the graves of his family; although even were it not for them, the building itself and the curious carvings of the miserere seats would attract many a visitor.

It is with feelings of something at last accomplished, some necessary pilgrimage made, that the cultured traveller stands before the monument on the north wall and looks upon it and on the row of ledger-stones on the floor. But the sentiments of Baconian monomaniacs are not at all reverent and respectful. They come also, but with hostile criticism. I think they would like to tear down that monument, and I am quite sure they would desire nothing better than permission to open that grave and howk up whatever they found there. For to them Shakespeare is "the illiterate clown of Stratford"; a very disreputable person; an impostor who could neither write nor act, and yet assumed the authorship of works by the greatest genius of the age, Francis Bacon. Twenty-four years ago in his *Great Cryptogram*, Ignatius Donnelly exposed the fraud and unmasked Shakespeare. Some one at that time referred in conversation with one of Mr. Donnelly's ingenious countrymen to "Shakespeare's Bust." "Yes,

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he is," rejoined that free and enlightened citizen: "he is bust and you won't mend him again."

He referred to the alleged cryptogram said to be by Bacon, and purporting to be discovered in the First Folio edition of the play, *Henry the Fourth*. It is amusing reading, this deciphered cipher, and if we were to believe it and Bacon to be its author, we should have no need to revise the old estimate of Bacon, "The wisest, wittiest, meanest of mankind." We should, however, find it necessary to emphasise "meanest," because he is made to reveal himself as one who wrote treasonable plays, and, being afraid to admit their authorship, bribed Shakespeare in a heavy sum to take the risk and retire out of danger to Stratford-on-Avon. It is not a convincing tale; but it is printed with much elaboration; and Bacon is made to show an astonishingly intimate knowledge of Shakespeare's family and affairs. He uses very ungentlemanly, not to say unphilosophical, language, and leaves Shakespeare without a shred of character. He shows how suddenly this misbegotten rogue, this whoreson knave, this gorbellied rascal with the wagging paunch and the many loathsome diseases which have made him old before his time leaves London, where he is in the midst of his fame as a dramatist, and retires to live upon his ill-gotten wealth as a country gentleman in his native town of Stratford-on-Avon. He was never an actor, and only succeeded in one part, that of Falstaff, for which he was peculiarly suited because of his great greasy stomach, at which, and not at the excellence of his acting, people came to laugh. Thus says Bacon; always according to Mr. Ignatius Donnelly, in the bi-literal cipher he persuaded himself he found. Here we see Bacon the philosopher, in very angry, unphilosophic mood, as abusive as any fish-fag or Sally Slapcabbage.



SHAKESPEARE'S MONUMENT.

(To see p. 80.)

THE BACONIAN FALLACY

And then this cuckoo, this strutting jay, who sets up to be a gentleman with a brand-new coat of arms presently dies, untimely, at fifty-two years of age, just like your Shakespeares! He must have had some good reason of his own for it; probably the better to do Bacon out of his due fame with posterity. But Bacon was not to be outwitted. He heard early in 1616 that Shakespeare was in failing health, and sent down on that three days' journey from London to Stratford-on-Avon two of Shakespeare's friends, Michael Drayton and Ben Jonson, who were in the secret of the authorship. They were instructed to see that if Shakespeare really insisted upon dying, the secret should not be divulged at the time. And Shakespeare, like the ungrateful wretch he was, did die. The diary of the Rev. John Ward, vicar of Stratford-on-Avon, contains an entry in 1662, referring reminiscently to Shakespeare's last days—

“Shakespeare, Drayton and Ben Jonson had a merrie meeting, and it seems, drank too hard, for Shakespeare died of a feavour there contracted.”

Donnelly suggests that Drayton and Jonson in Bacon's interest duly saw Shakespeare buried, and so deeply that it would be for ever unlikely he should be exhumed, and Bacon's secret revealed. He founds this upon a letter discovered in 1884 in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, written in 1694 by one William Hall, of Queen's College, to a friend, Edward Thwaites; in which, in the course of describing a visit to Stratford-on-Avon, he states that Shakespeare was buried “full seventeen feet deep—deep enough to secure him!” This recalls at once the reply of one of Mr. Donnelly's irreverent countrymen before the tomb of Nelson in St. Paul's Cathedral. The verger had pointed out that the Admiral's body was enclosed in a leaden coffin and a

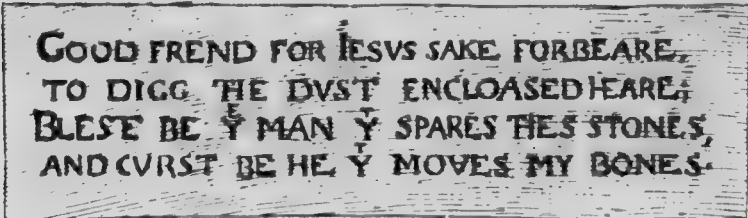
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wooden outer covering, and then placed in a marble sarcophagus weighing 90 tons. "I guess you've got him!" exclaimed the contemplative stranger; "if ever he gets out of that, cable me, at my expense!" No doubt Ben Jonson and Drayton guessed they had got Shakespeare safe enough, but to make doubly sure (says Donnelly) they invented and had engraved the famous verse which appears on the gravestone, involving blessings upon the man who "spares these stones" and curses upon he who moves the poet's bones. The world has always thought Shakespeare himself was the author of these lines. The reason for them is found in the horror felt by Shakespeare—and reflected in *Hamlet*—at the disturbance of the remains of the dead. In his time it was the custom to rifle the older graves, in order to provide room for fresh burials, and then to throw the bones from them into the vaulted charnel-house beneath the chancel. This revolting irreverence, which, as a long-established custom at that time, seemed a natural enough thing to the average person, was horrific to one of Shakespeare's exceptional sensibilities; and he adopted not only this deep burial but also the curse upon the sacrilegious hand that should dare disturb his rest. There is not the least room for objection to this story; but the Baconians know better. "*There must have been some reason,*" objects Donnelly, in italics. There was; the reason already shown. But in dealing with a fellow like Shakespeare you—if you are a Baconian—have to go behind the obvious and the palpable and seek the absurd and improbable. It does not appear what Shakespeare's widow, his daughters, his sons-in-law and his executors were doing while Drayton and Ben Jonson were thus having their own Baconian way with Shakespeare's body. They, according to this theory, simply looked on; which we

LITTLE-KNOWN FACTS

might think an absurd thing to suppose, except that nothing is too absurd for a Baconian, as we shall now see.

Not only did Drayton and Jonson invent and get these verses engraved, they also—more amazing still—inserted Bacon's bi-literal cipher into them. Now it is to be remarked here that the deeply-engraved lines upon which so many thousands of pilgrims gaze reverently are not, in their present form, so old as they appear to be, but were recut, and the lettering greatly modified, about 1831. Not one person in ten thousand of those



GOOD FREND FOR IESVS SAKE FORBEARE,
TO DIGG THE DVST ENCLOASED HEARE,
BLESE BE Y MAN Y SPARES THES STONES,
AND CVRST BE HE Y MOVES MY BONES.

INSCRIPTION ON SHAKESPEARE'S GRAVE.

who come to this spot is aware of the fact, and no illustration of the original lettering exists; but George Steevens, the Shakespearean scholar, wrote of it, about 1770, as an "uncouth mixture of small and capital letters." He transcribed it, and so also in their turn did Knight and Malone. Some slight discrepancies exist between these transcriptions, in the exact dispositions of the letters, but the actual inscription appears to have been as under—

"Good Frend for Iesvs SAKE forbeare
To diGG T-E Dvst Encl-Ased HE.Re.
Blest be T-E Man Y^t spares T-Es Stones
And cvrst be He Y^t moves my bones."

The hyphens between the words "the" and "thes" represent the old-time habit of engraving some of the

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

letters conjoined, as seen repeated in the existing inscription illustrated here, in which the word "bleste" forms a prominent example. In that word the letters "ste" are in like manner conjoined, leading very many of the not fully-informed among the copyists of inscriptions to read it "blese."

Halliwell-Phillipps, the foremost Shakespearean authority of his age (whom his arch-enemy, the emphatic F. J. Furnivall delighted, by the way, to style "Hell-P") thus refers to the re-cut inscription in his *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare*, 1881—

"The honours of repose, which have thus far been conceded to the poet's remains, have not been extended to the tombstone. The latter had by the middle of the last century (*i. e.* about 1750) sunk below the level of the floor, and about fifty years ago (*c.* 1831) had become so much decayed as to suggest a vandalic order for its removal, and in its stead to place a new slab, one which marks certainly the locality of Shakespeare's grave, and continues the record of the farewell lines, but indicates nothing more. The original memorial has wandered from its allotted station no man can tell whither—a sacrifice to the insane worship of prosaic neatness, that mischievous demon whose votaries have practically destroyed so many of the priceless relics of ancient England and her gifted sons."

The cipher which Donnelly, the resourceful sleuth-hound, pretends he has found in the older inscription, is destroyed by the re-arrangement in the new. It was not, he says, the sheer illiteracy of the local mason who cut the original letters that accounts for the eccentric appearance of capitals where they have no business to be; for the hyphen which so oddly divides the word "Enclo-Ased"; for the full-stops in "HE.Re." or for the curious choice that writes "Iesvs" in small letters and "SAKE" in large capitals. No; it was the necessities of the cipher which accounted for this weird "derangement of epitaphs"; and Donnelly proceeds to emulate the conjurer who produces unexpected things from empty hats, and he finally arrives at this startling revelation—

THE BACON SYNDICATE

"Francis Bacon wrote the Greene, Marlowe, and Shakespeare plays."

As Mark Twain—another Baconian—says, "Bacon was a born worker." Yes, indeed; but he understates it, if we were to believe this revelation. To have done all this he would need to have been a syndicate.

CHAPTER X

The Church of the Holy Trinity, Stratford-on-Avon (*concluded*) -
The Shakespeare grave and monument - The Miserere Seats.

THE Baconians are so extravagant that it becomes scarce worth while to refute their wild statements; but when they are carried to these extremities we may well note them, for the enjoyment of a laugh. But perhaps Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence gives us the better entertainment when he tells us that Bacon wrote the preface to the Authorised Version of the Bible, and was in fact the literary editor of that translation and responsible for its style!

With an ineffable serenity the portrait-figure of Shakespeare (generally called a "bust," but it is a half-length) in the monument looks down from the north wall of the spacious chancel upon the graves of himself and his family. The monument itself is thoroughly characteristic of the Renaissance taste of the period: in the church of St. Andrew Undershaft, in the city of London, you may see a not dissimilar example to John Stow, the historian, who died eleven years before Shakespeare. He also, like Shakespeare's effigy, holds a quill pen in his hand. The accompanying illustration renders description scarce necessary, and it is only to the portrait that we need especially direct attention. In common with everything relating to Shakespeare, it has been the subject of great controversy: not altogether warranted, for it is certain that it was executed before 1623, seven years after the poet's death, when his widow, daughters



THE CHANCEL, HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, WITH SHAKESPEARE'S MONUMENT

QUINTESSENTIAL APPRECIATION

and sons-in-law were yet living, and it seems beyond all reasonable argument to deny that a monument erected under their supervision should, and does, in fact, present as good a likeness of him as they could procure. The effigy was sculptured by one Gerard Johnson (or Janssen), son of a Dutch craftsman in this mortuary art, whose workshop being in Southwark near the "Globe" theatre, must have rendered Shakespeare's personal appearance familiar to him, while the features are considered to be copied from a death-mask which was probably taken by Dr. John Hall, husband of Shakespeare's elder daughter, Susanna.

The inscription runs—

*"Iudicio Pylium, genio Socratem, arte Maronem,
Terra tegit, populus meret, Olympus habet."*

which is translated thus—

"He was in judgment a Nestor, in genius a Socrates, and in art a Virgil; the earth covers, the people mourn, and Heaven holds him."

There then follow the English lines—

*"Stay, Passenger, why goest thou by so fast?
Read if thou canst, when envious Death hath plast
Within this monument, Shakespeare, with whom
Quick Nature dide; whose name doth deck y^e Tombe
Far more then coste, sith all y^e He hath writt
Leaves living art but page to serve his witt,*

*"Obiit anno dñi 1616,
Ætatis 53, Die 23 Ap."*

The author of Shakespeare's epitaph is unknown. It would seem to have been some one who had not seen the monument, and knew nothing of its character; for he imagines his lines are to be inscribed upon a tomb within which the poet's body is placed. But however little he knew of Shakespeare's monument, he knew the worth of his plays and poems: "Shakespeare, with whom quick nature died." It is the very summary, the quintessence, of Shakespearean appreciation.

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

Like everything else associated with Shakespeare, the monument has had its vicissitudes. The effigy, originally painted to resemble life, showed the poet to have had auburn hair and light hazel eyes. In 1748 a well-meaning Mr. John Ward repaired the monument and retouched the effigy with colour, and in 1793 Malone persuaded the vicar to have it painted white; an outrage satirised by the lines written in the church visitors' book in 1810—

"Stranger, to whom this Monument is shewn,
Invoke the Poet's curse upon Malone
Whose meddling zeal his barbarous taste betrays,
And smears his tombstone as he marr'd his plays."

It was not until 1861 that the white paint was scraped off and the original colour restored, by the light of what traces remained.

Opinions have greatly varies as to the merits of the portrait, and many observers have been disappointed with it. Dr. Ingleby, for one, was distressed by its "painful stare, with goggle eyes and gaping mouth." But the measure of this disappointment is exactly in proportion to the perhaps exaggerated expectations held. We must bear in mind that the sculptor worked from a death-mask, and that the expression was thus a conventional restoration.

Mark Twain, who, like the egregious Ignatius Donnelly, did not believe that Shakespeare wrote Shakespeare, founded a good deal of his disbelief on the unvexed serenity of this monumental bust. It troubled him greatly that it should be there, so serene and emotionless. "The bust, too, there in the Stratford church. The precious bust, the priceless bust, the calm bust with the dandy moustache and the putty face, unseamed of care—that face which has loo'ed passionlessly down upon the awed pilgrim for a hundred and fifty years, and will

TIMOROUS TROUBLE-TOMBS

still down look upon the awed pilgrim three hundred more, with the deep, deep, deep, subtle, subtle, subtle expression of a bladder." What, then, did he expect? A tragic mask, a laughing face of comedy? But Mark Twain hardly counts as a Shakespeare critic.

It is forgotten by most people that the painting and scraping have wrought some changes, not for the better, in the expression of the face, tending towards making it what Halliwell-Phillipps too extravagantly calls a "miserable travesty of an intellectual human being." However lifeless the expression, we see the features are those of a man of affairs. They are good and in no way abnormal. The brow is broad and lofty; the jaw and chin, while not massive, perhaps more than a thought heavier than usual. This was a man, one thinks, who would have succeeded in whatever walk of life he chose, and that is exactly the impression derived from the known facts and the traditions of Shakespeare's life.

There have been numerous arguments in recent times in favour of digging that dust which the poet's curse has thus far kept inviolate, but the courage has been lacking to it; whether in view of the curse or in fear of public opinion seems to be uncertain.

The late J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps wrote, about 1885: "It is not many years since a phalanx of trouble-tombs, lanterns and spades in hand, assembled in the chancel at dead of night, intent on disobeying the solemn injunction that the bones of Shakespeare were not to be disturbed. But the supplicatory lines prevailed. There were some amongst the number who, at the last moment, refused to incur the warning condemnation and so the design was happily abandoned."

Nor would it appear that the graves of his family have been disturbed. They lie in a row, with his own, before the altar, a position they occupy by right of

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

Shakespeare having purchased the rectorial tithes, and thus becoming that curious anomaly, a "lay rector." It matters little or nothing where one's bones are laid, but the doing this, and thus acquiring the right of sepulture in the most honoured place in the church, seems to imply that Shakespeare expected to found a family, and to see that his name was honoured to future generations in his native town.

We are not to suppose that the clergy of that time welcomed Shakespeare's burial in this honoured place, but they could not help themselves. He had acquired the right, and although he had lived well into a time when puritanism had banished plays and players from Stratford, and although as a playwright he must have been regarded by many as a lost soul—unless, indeed, he became a converted man in his last year or so—his rights had to be observed.

Immediately next the wall is the flat stone that marks the grave of Anne Shakespeare, who survived her husband, and died August 6th, 1623, aged sixty-seven. An eight-line Latin verse, probably by her son-in-law, Dr. John Hall, and couched in the most affectionate terms, is inscribed upon a small brass plate; it is thus rendered—

"Milk, life thou gavest. For a boon so great,
Mother, alas! I give thee but a stone;
O! might some angel blest remove its weight,
Thy form should issue like thy Saviour's own.
But vain my prayers; O Christ, come quickly, come!
And thou, my Mother, shalt from hence arise,
Though closed as yet within this narrow tomb,
To meet thy Saviour in the starry skies."

Next in order comes the slab covering the grave of Shakespeare himself, and following it that of Thomas Nash, husband of Elizabeth Hall, grand-daughter of the poet. He died in 1647, aged fifty-three, and is honoured in a four-line Latin verse. Fourthly comes

A DEFEATED PROJECT

the grave of Dr. Hall, who died in 1635, aged sixty, with a six-line Latin verse, and next is that of Susanna, Shakespeare's elder daughter, wife of Dr. Hall. She died in 1649, aged sixty-six, and has this poetic appreciation for epitaph—

“Witty above her sexe, but that's not all,
Wise to Salvation was good Mistris Hall,
Something of Shakespeare was in that, but this
Wholy of him with whom she's now in blisse.
Then, Passenger, ha'st ne're a teare
To weepe with her that wept with all?
That wept, yet set herselfe to chere
Them up with comforts cordiall.
Her Love shall live, her mercy spread,
When thou hast ne're a teare to shed.”

This touching tribute was nearly lost in the gross outrage perpetrated in or about 1707, when it was erased for the purpose of providing room for an inscription to one Richard Watts. Happily Dugdale, in his monumental history of Warwickshire, had recorded it, and it was re-cut from that evidence in 1836.

It is gratifying to note that no monuments to self-advertising members of the theatrical profession, or others who obtain a reflected glory from association with Shakespeare, have been allowed here, although we have to thank an aroused public opinion, and not the clergy, the natural guardians of the spot, for that. It was proposed, a few years ago, to place a memorial to that entirely blameless actress, well versed in Shakespearean parts, Helen Faucit, Lady Martin, on the wall opposite Shakespeare's monument, and it was nearly accomplished. The clergy blessed the project, the public were allowed to hear little or nothing about it, and the thing would have been done, except for protests raised at the eleventh hour. The monument eventually found its way to the Shakespeare Memorial, where it may now be found, but those responsible for the proposal

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

were not wholly to be balked, and the evidence of their persistence is to be seen in the nave, where a very elaborate dark-green marble pulpit, in memory of Helen Faucit, and given by her husband, Sir Theodore Martin, attracts attention.

There has been a good deal of praise and admiration of the modern stained glass in the noble windows of the chancel and the windows of the church in general, including those given by American admirers of Shakespeare, but the truth is that there is no stained glass in Stratford church above the commercial level of the ordinary ecclesiastical furnisher, and the sooner the fact is recognised, the better for all concerned. The guide-books will tell you nothing of this, but we have to see things for ourselves, and use our own judgment.

The tomb of the rebuilder of the chancel, Thomas Balsall, is little noticed. It is seen under the east window, on the north side, and is a greatly mutilated, but still beautiful, altar-tomb. Above it, on the wall, is the monument with fine portrait-busts of Richard Combe and his intended wife, Judith, who died 1649. The altar-tomb, with effigy, of John Combe, 1614, of the College, and of Welcombe, a friend of Shakespeare, is against the east wall. Combe was a man of wealth, who did not disdain the part of money-lender. He had the reputation of an usurer, although ten per cent. was his moderate rate, and, according to the tradition, hearing it said that Shakespeare had an epitaph waiting for him, begged to hear it. This, then, was what he heard—

“Ten in a hundred lies here engraved,
’Tis a hundred to ten his soul is not saved.
If any man ask, Who lies in this tomb?
Ho! ho! says the Devil, ’tis my John-a-Combe.”

It is an idle story, and the verse is adapted from an epigram in the jest-books of the age.

THE MISERERES

A prominent feature of a collegiate church was the stalls, with their miserere seats, for the priests, and we have here stalls for twenty-six, still retaining their beautifully carved seats, little injured by time or violence. We do, in fact, frequently find the miserere carvings uninjured in cathedrals, abbeys and collegiate churches; largely because they are always on the underside of the seats and thus apt to be overlooked. Those at Stratford are well up to the general level of interest and amusement.

Amusement? Yes. The very broadest fun, sometimes particularly coarse, lurks in these often unsuspected places; and the greatest artistry of the wood-carver too, who will turn at random from the loving rendering of flower or foliage, to sacred symbols; then to the representation of birds and beasts and extraordinary chimeras that never existed outside the frontiers of Nightmare Land; and to queer domestic or social scenes. Here we find prime examples of such things. Under one seat a Crown of Thorns and the I.H.S. occur, on either side of a scene showing a man and wife fighting. He has a long beard which she is pulling with one hand, while with the other she bastes him with a ladle. She employs her feet, too, in kicking him.

Under the next seat we see this domestic strife resumed, but it is shown in two scenes, over which a central woman-headed beast presides. Here the termagant pulls her husband's beard and tears his mouth open, while he retaliates by pulling her hair. The other scene represents the taming of the shrew. A naked woman is being thrashed by a man, and a dog completes the retribution by biting her leg.

Among the other carvings we note the favourite Bear and Ragged Staff of this district; a beggar's monkey, with chained tin pot, or drinking-vessel, and a variety

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

of minor subjects. Among the most interesting is that example illustrated here.

The subject is that of the once-popular legend of the unicorn, which was, according to mediæval story, an animal of the fiercest and most untamable kind, and only to be captured in one way. This way was to find a virgin, at once of great beauty and unquestioned virtue, and to conduct her to the unicorn's haunts in the green-wood. Immediately the animal, tame only in the pres-



A STRATFORD MISERERE: THE LEGEND OF THE UNICORN.

ence of a pure virgin, would come and lay its head gently and fearlessly in her lap; whereupon the hunter would steal forth and slay the confiding beast.

It is to be remarked here that the person who could invent such a story, whatever else he was, and however fearless his imagination, was, clearly enough, no sportsman. It is quite easy to imagine such an one shooting a sitting pheasant, or poisoning a fox.

Here, in the illustration, we perceive the maiden, not so beautiful as the carver intended her to be, caressing the confiding unicorn and apparently scratching him behind the ear, while an unsportsmanlike person digs him in the rump at leisure, with a spear-headed weapon.

CHAPTER XI

Shottery and Anne Hathaway's Cottage.

THE hamlet of Shottery, now growing a considerable village, is but one mile from the centre of Stratford. You come to it most easily by way of Rother Street, and at the end of that thoroughfare will observe a signpost marked "Footpath to Shottery." The spot is not inspiring, and one could well wish Shottery, the home of Anne Hathaway and the scene of Shakespeare's wooing, had not been so near the town. Stratford is a pleasant place, and as little bedevilled with modern unhistorical suburbs as any town of its size; but there is a red rash of new and quite typically suburban villas on these outskirts. I feel quite sure the sanitation is perfect and that there are baths and hot and cold water laid on to every one of these "desirable residences"; and no one would breathe upon the obvious respectability of the people who live in them. Respectable? Most certainly; why, by the evidence of one's ears in passing, every house appears to have a piano; and the possession of one would seem in these times to be by far a better-accepted criterion of respectability than the ownership of a gig; which Carlyle in his day noted as the ideal. Now, it is quite certain that none of the houses Shakespeare ever dwelt in had any sanitation at all; if he ever took a bath, he was as exceptional in that matter as in most other things, and quite unlike his generation. New Place had neither hot nor cold water laid on, and never had a piano. Judged

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by modern standards Shakespeare could scarcely have been respectable; his era did not even know the word in its present meaning, which is a terrible thought; let us pause to contemplate the deficiencies of our ancestors.

Well, we will not, at any rate, stay to look longer at these developments, but, like that rogue, Autolycus, "jog on the footpath way," a little disillusioned perhaps, because it presently leads to a level railway-crossing which was not here when Shakespeare went across the fields in the summer evenings to see Anne Hathaway. Thence coming upon allotment gardens, where we more or less "merrily hent the stile-a," we arrive at Shottery by way of some tapestry works and a book-bindery.

Shottery, it is at once seen, has been spoiled, utterly and irredeemably, unless the recent doings are levelled with the ground and wholly abolished—which we need not expect to be done. Deplorable activity has lately been manifested here, in the building of rows of small, cheap cottages. The bloom has been rudely rubbed off the peach, and the idyllic place which the hero-worshipper fondly expected has ceased to be. Yet parts of it are good. You may turn your back upon these things and see a very charming double row of old cottages, the Post Office among them, as ancient and rustic and half-timbered as the rest, with a very noble group of trees for background, and by way of foreground a red brick and timber barn belonging to Shottery manor-house, whose old stone dovecote stands yet in the garden. I have sketched these old cottages, in an attempt to show you how charming the scene really is.

It has been suggested that the roomy loft beneath the roof of the manor-house was used as a secret Roman Catholic place of worship when that religion was proscribed, and that the mystery of Shakespeare's marriage is to be explained by the ceremony having taken place



SHOOTERY.

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

here. But, ingenious although the suggestion may be, it has no shred of evidence to support it, nor would it appear from anything we know of Shakespeare's religious beliefs, that he was a Roman Catholic at all, much less a fanatical one, as such a proceeding would argue.

Anne Hathaway's cottage should certainly stand in this, the better part of the village, but it is situated at the extreme further end; and the hapless artist who seeks to sketch the scene already described will find himself acting as a kind of honorary signpost to it. The tragedy of his fate is that the best point of view happens to be from the middle of the road, and that the interruptions from motor-cars, largely carrying Americans, who invariably ask, "Saay, is this the waay to Anne Hathawaay's cottuj?" are incessant.

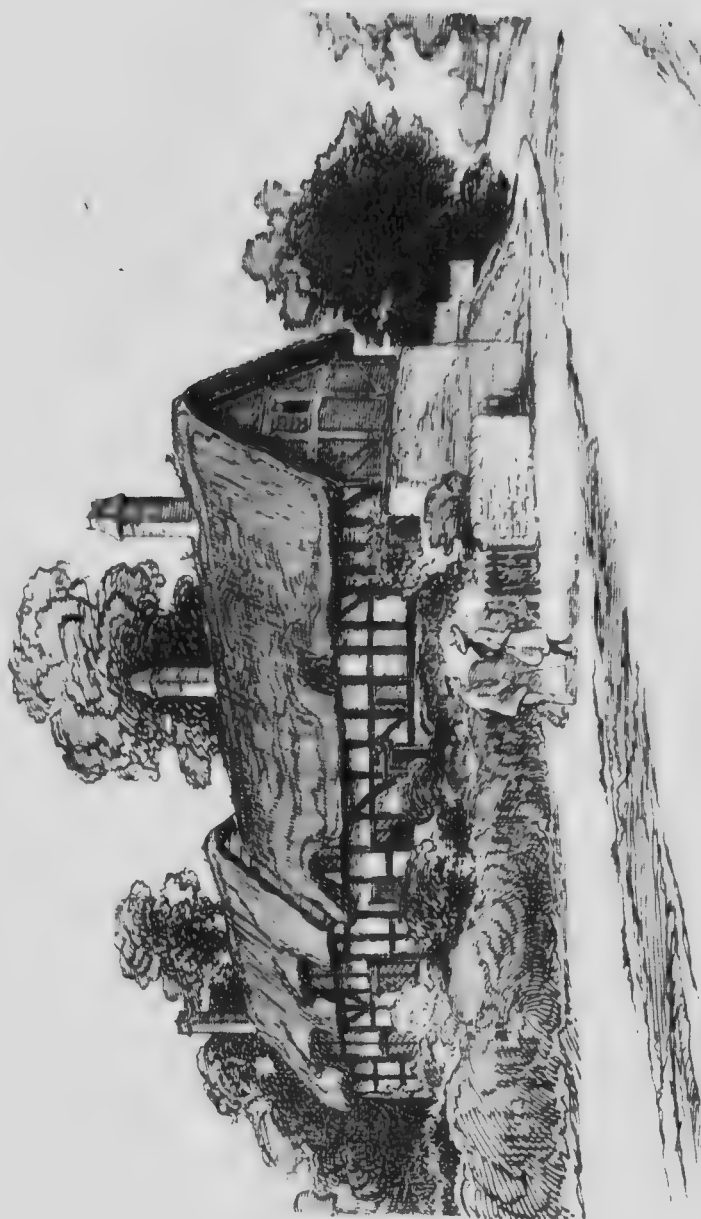
The famous cottage, which is really more than a cottage and part of a farmhouse, comes into view as you round a corner and cross a small brick bridge over Shottery Brook. The bridge is so overhung and shut in by trees that you scarcely notice it to be a bridge at all; but if these be early summer days and the season not exceptionally dry, the brook can be heard hoarsely plunging beneath, over a quite respectably large weir. When Mistress Anne Hathaway lived at the farmhouse now called her cottage—which is an entirely wrong use of the possessive case, for it never belonged to her—Shottery Brook was to be crossed only by a watersplash for vehicles, and a plank footbridge for pedestrians; but progress and the prosperity of the county funds have changed all that. I wish they had not: it would be all the better if one came to the place just in the way Shakespeare used.

The rustic cottage, still heavily thatched, comes before one's gaze with that complete familiarity which is the result of numberless illustrations. It stands at right-

ANNE HATHAWAY

angles to the road, with a large garden in front of it. I would be enthusiastic about that garden if I honestly might, but truth forbids me to compete with the exaggerated praise of it commonly lavished by writers upon this scene. It is just a pleasant rustic garden, partly used for growing beans, cabbages, potatoes and the usual cottager's produce; with the customary borders and beds of old-fashioned flowers. A stone-paved path leads up to the door. Hundreds of such gardens beautify the old cottages of the Warwickshire villages and hamlets; and many of them, I declare it, are very much better. The house itself is built in the customary local manner, on a rough blue lias foundation, with thick walls partly of the same material, here and there varied by red brick, and framed with ancient timbering. Latticed windows light the various rooms. It is a building of rather late in the fifteenth century, and appears to have been first tenanted by the Hathaways in 1556, when one John of that name, described as an archer, was living here. "Hewlands" was then the name of the farm. The Hathaway family did not actually possess it until 1610, when Bartholomew, Anne's eldest brother, purchased the property.

Anne Hathaway was the eldest of the three daughters of Richard, who died in June 1582. His four sons, Bartholomew, Thomas, John, and William, were provided for, and the daughters were left £6 13s. 4d. each, Anne, or "Agnes," as she is described in the will, the names being in those times interchangeable, was to receive hers on the day of her marriage; her sister Catherine on the like occasion; and Margaret was to receive her share at the age of seventeen. Anne was married in a hurry to William Shakespeare at the close of November in the same year. The Shakespearean connection with the cottage at Shottery is thus not alto-



ANNE HATHAWAY'S COTTAGE

ANNE HATHAWAY'S COTTAGE

gether so intimate or so continuous as would at first be supposed.

The Hathaways would appear to have executed numerous repairs to the farmhouse which Bartholomew had acquired, and to this day we may see a stone tablet let into one of the chimneys, bearing the initials "J H" (for John Hathaway) and the date 1697; while the same initials and date, together with those of "E H" which doubtless stand for Elizabeth Hathaway, his wife, occur on the bacon-cupboard in the ingle-nook of the living-room. The last of the Hathaways was another John, who died in 1746, but the house remained in the hands of descendants until 1838. At last it came into possession of one Alderman Thompson, of Stratford-on-Avon, who in 1892 sold it to the Trustees of Shakespeare's Birthplace, for £3000. The furniture was bought for a further £500. The Alderman is said to have made a very good thing out of it, but he would probably have done still better if he had waited a few years longer. The average number of visitors, who pay sixpence each to view the cottage, is 40,000 a year. The simplest calculation shows that to mean an income of £1000, and the upkeep cannot be very expensive. But the heavy thatch will soon again have to be renewed. The plentiful lack of understanding among many of the visitors is such that they frequently appear to think the thatch as old as Shakespeare's day. It must, of course, have been many times re-covered, and at the present time it is again in a dilapidated condition, sodden through with the weather of many years, and precariously held together by wire netting stretched over it. A very garden of weeds grows there: shepherds' purse, groundsel, candy-tuft and dandelion; and poppies wave their red banners on the roof-ridge.

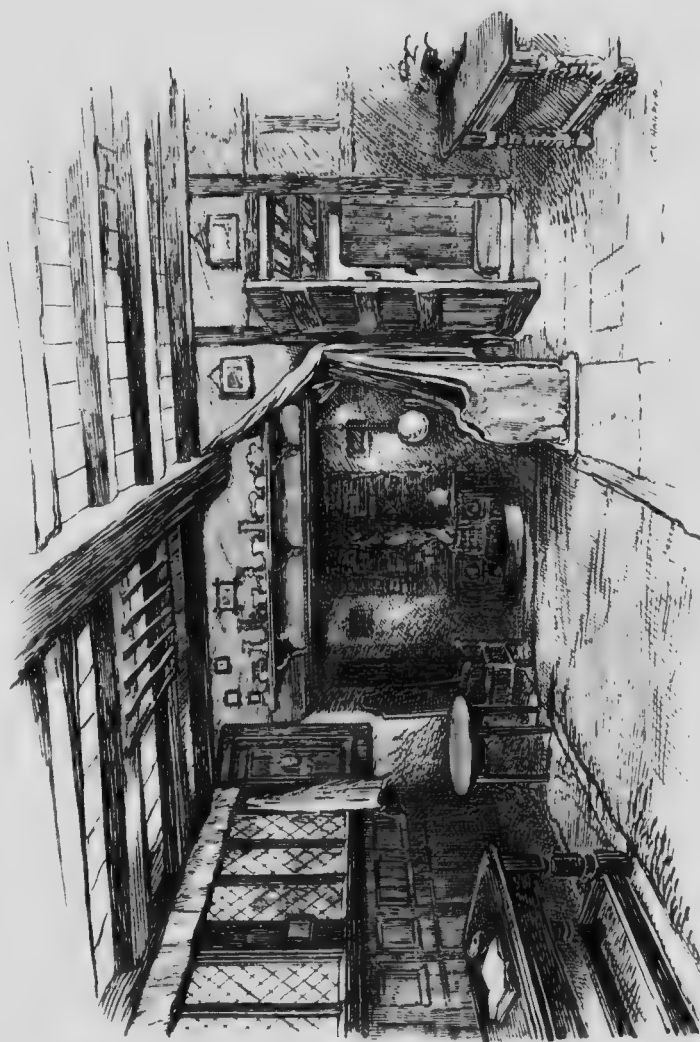
There are twelve rooms in the house, and of these

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

seven are shown. The showing is a very businesslike proceeding nowadays. At the garden gate you read the strict rules of the Trust, and then, having paid your sixpence, receive a printed and numbered ticket. A party of four hundred and fifty persons from Sheffield was expected on the last occasion the present writer visited the place, and exactly how much mental sustenance or what clear impression that half-battalion of excursionists could have received, it would be difficult to say. "We have to put 'em through quick," said one in charge. Obviously it must needs be so, else how would all see the house before day was done?

Entering by a low-browed doorway, a stone-paved passage opens into rooms right and left. On the left, down two steps, is the living-room, also, like all these ground-floor rooms, stone-floored. Overhead are old oaken beams and joists, and the rough walls are partly panelled. There are pictures without number of this old-world interior, the most characteristic of them that showing Mrs. Baker, who for many years received visitors, sitting by the fireside, in company with her old family Bibie, in which the births, marriages and deaths of many Hathaways are recorded. She proved her descent from them by way of a niece of Anne Hathaway; whom, it is rather curious to reflect, no one ever thinks of styling by her married name, "Mrs. Shakespeare." I cannot help thinking she would have resented it, if addressed by her maiden name.

But Mrs. Baker, who lived in the cottage for seventy years and appeared to be almost as permanent a feature of it as the very walls and roof-tree, died in September 1899, at the age of eighty-seven. Still, however, the photographic view of the old lady sitting there is easily first favourite among all the interior views of the cottage; and many are those visitors who, coming here and not



THE LIVING-ROOM, ANNE HATHAWAY'S COTTAGE.

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

seeing the familiar figure, miss it as keenly as they would any intimate article of furniture.

An old and time-worn wooden settle stands beside the ingle-nook. One may still sit in the corner seats, but a modern grate occupies the hearth on which the logs were burnt in the Hathaways' time. Little square recesses in the wall show where the tinder-box was kept, and where those who sat here in olden times set down their jug and glass. The brightly-burnished copper warming-pan that hangs here, together with the bellows, is not, I think, credited with a Hathaway lineage. These once necessary, but now obsolete, household articles are simply placed here for the purpose of giving a more convincing air to this old home; but one suspects that some day, when the critical attitude relaxes, they will acquire a kind of brevet rank, and perhaps eventually even fully qualify as genuine heirlooms.

The spacious bacon-cupboard, where the flour was also stored, in the thickness of the wall on the left-hand side of the ingle-nook, is a very fine specimen. The neighbourhood of Stratford is particularly rich in these old bacon-cupboards, which indeed seem to be almost a peculiar feature of the district. There is one at Shakespeare's Birthplace, in the town, and another at the "Windmill" inn, in Church Street, and numerous other examples exist in private houses; but this is the best specimen I have yet seen, and the better kept; the open lattice-work oaken door, bearing the initials "I. H., E. H., I. B., 1697," being well polished. A further storage place for bacon is the cratch (otherwise the "rack") in the roof-joists. You see it in the accompanying illustration.

The long, broad mantel-shelf bears the usual collection of candlesticks and "chimney ornaments." Under a window is an old table, with the visitors'-book, and on

FLINT-AND-STEEL

the opposite side of the room stands an equally old dresser, with a display of blue and white plates and dishes : a grandfather's clock between it and the door. Gaping visitors are usually shown, by partial demonstration, with flint-and-steel, how our long-suffering and patient ancestors struck a light, but the process is not demonstrated in its entirety. To strike a spark off a flint with a piece of steel is an easy matter, but if the whole process of directing the sparks upon the tinder in the tinder-box and then blowing the tinder into a flame were gone through, visitors would be very much more astonished at the inconveniences endured by our forbears before the invention of matches. To get a light in this way was the most chancy thing in the world. The tinder might possibly catch with the first spark, or again it might take a quarter of an hour. I think Job must have taken his first lessons in patience with flint-and-steel and tinder on a cold winter's morning. We see, from these fire-raising difficulties, a reason why our ancestors very rarely allowed the fires on their hearthstones to go out. Fuel was cheap in the country, and commonly to be had for the mere gathering of it, while if you let your fire burn out, it could only be lighted again at considerable pains. These seem altogether tales of an olden time, and they do actually strike the visitors to Shottery as very remote indeed ; but there are yet many persons living to whom flint-and-steel and the tinder-box were as matter-of-course and necessary articles as the match-box is now.

The room to the right of the entrance-passage is the kitchen. Here again is an ingle-nook, and heavy beams support the floor above. A very tall man could not walk upright in this room, for these timbers are only about 5 ft. 11 inches from the floor. The ancient hearth remains here, and the oven runs deep into the masonry :

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

a considerable space—almost large enough to be called a room—running round to the back of it. The little window seen rather high up in the wall of the house as you enter by the garden-gate lights this space.

Returning across the passage and through the living-room, the dairy, a little stone-flagged room is seen at the back. The door here, like most of the others, has



ANNE HATHAWAY'S BEDROOM.

the old English wooden latch known as the "Drunkard's latch" because its cumbrous woodwork affords so good a hold for fumbling fingers.

Upstairs, on the left, is "Anne Hathaway's bedroom," where the chief object is a beautiful, but decrepit as to its lower legs, four-post sixteenth-century bedstead. The legs have assumed a permanently knock-kneed position, which humorous visitors affect to believe was caused by the bed having been used, something after the fashion of the Great Bed of Ware, not only for one

AN OLD BEDSTEAD

person, but in common. It is indeed a very large bedstead. Apart from its size, it is certainly the finest article of furniture in the house, the headboard being beautifully carved with grotesque figures in the Renaissance style then in vogue. The sheets are of old hand-spun flax, and a glass-covered case displayed on the bed contains a pillow-case of fine linen and beautiful needlework, traditionally the work of Anne. The mattresses of this bedstead and of the plainer one in the next bedroom are of plaited rushes. Here rough bed-curtains, dyed a dull yellow by a vegetable dye, are obviously of great age. A small slip room of no interest is shown, opening out of this second bedroom, and with that the exploration of the house is concluded.

CHAPTER XII

Charlecote.

To Charlecote, four miles east of Stratford, is an expedition rarely ever omitted by the Shakespearean tourist, for it is associated with one of the most romantic traditions of the poet's life; that of the famous poaching incident, which may well have been the disposing cause of his leaving his native town and seeking fortune in London. The balance of opinion is strongly in favour of accepting the story, which comes down to us by way of Archdeacon Davis, Vicar of the Gloucestershire village of Sapperton, who died in 1708. He says the youth "was much given to all unluckiness in stealing venison and rabbits, particularly from Sir Thomas Lucy, who had him oft whipped and sometimes imprisoned, and at last made him fly his native county, to his great advancement."

This does not at first sight present a flattering picture of William Shakespeare, but we have to consider that the deer- and game-raiders of that era were not on the blackguardly level of the modern poacher. They were commonly sportive and high-spirited youths, who went about the business of it in company. At the same time, he ought at this juncture to have given up this hazardous sport. The probable date of his leaving for London, fleeing before the anger of Sir Thomas Lucy, is either the summer of 1585 or 1587. He was in the former year twenty-one years of age, had already been two years and a half a married man, and was the father of

THE LITERARY TEMPERAMENT

three children. In imagination we can hear John Shakespeare's friends prophesying that his son Will would "come to no good." The same ungenerous thing has no doubt been prophesied of every high-couraged lad from time immemorial.

In revenge for Sir Thomas Lucy's reprisals Shakespeare is said to have written some satirical verses and fastened them on the park gates of Charlecote. Some of the lines have, in tradition, survived—

"A Parliament member, a Justice of Peace,
At home a poor scarecrow, in London an Ass,
If lousy is Lucy, as some folk miscall it,
Then Lucy is lousy, whatever befall it,
He thinks himself great,
Yet an ass in his state
We allow by his ears with but asses to mate."

This has been styled a "worthless effusion," and attempts have been made to pooh-pooh it; but whatever its worth or otherwise, it distinctly shows that *sarva indignatio*—that unmeasured fury which is one of the stigmata of the literary temperament. Its extravagance is no point against it, and to show that Sir Thomas Lucy was neither a scarecrow nor an ass is altogether beside the mark.

Shakespeare, rubbing his hurts, put all the hatred he could into his rhythmic abuse, and did not stop to consider how closely it tallied with actualities. Now let us reconstruct the actual man. The real Sir Thomas was a personage of wealth inherited unimpaired, and of undoubted culture and esteem: in the words of his contemporaries a "right worshipful knight." He reigned long in the home of his ancestors at Charlecote, to which he succeeded in 1552, upon the death of his father. He was then only twenty years of age, and he lived until 1602. He had for tutor none other than John Foxe, the martyrologist, to whom his father, Sir

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

Thomas, had given shelter. "Foxe, forsaken by his friends, and accused of heresy for professing the reformed religion, was left naked of all human assistance; when God's providence began to show itself, procuring for him a safe refuge in the house of the Worshipful Knight, Sir Thomas Lucy, of Charlecote in Warwickshire, who received him into his family as tutor, and he remained there till his pupils no longer needed instruction." Foxe was married here, at Charlecote, in 1547.

In common with the rich landowners of his time, Sir Thomas Lucy was a patron of architecture and the arts, and in no way the inferior of his contemporaries, as the beautiful hall of Charlecote, built by him, sufficiently proves. Six years after coming into his inheritance he demolished the old mansion and erected that we now see. The house of Lucy had never before lived in such state as that he enjoyed. In 1565 he received the honour of knighthood, and first sat in Parliament in 1571: in all these and succeeding years filling the usual local magisterial offices of a personage of his station. He is said to have entertained Queen Elizabeth on her progress to Kenilworth, in 1572, and the entrance porch to the front of the house is said to have been added for the occasion; a tradition that may well be true, for it is a more elaborate structure than the surrounding composition. It is two storeys in height, and in stone: the frontage in general being chiefly of brick. It is also obviously an addition, and is not exactly central. The building of it converted the ground plan into the semblance of a capital E, which was the courtly way among architects and their patrons of paying a compliment to Queen Elizabeth. Is it not thus sufficiently clear that in the building of his new mansion Sir Thomas had overlooked this customary compliment and that he hurriedly added it, over against the Queen's coming?

SIR THOMAS LUCY

The prominence of the sculptured royal arms over the doorway, with the initials "E.R.," lend support to this view.

This very magnificent person might well "think himself great," for he was the most considerable landowner in the district, and everywhere deferred to. Besides providing himself with a stately new residence he paid great attention to preserving game on his various estates, and is found in March 1585, about the time of Shakespeare's alleged poaching exploit, in charge of a Bill in Parliament for its better preservation in the parks of England, which he would appear to have considered not sufficiently protected by the law of some twenty-three years earlier, prescribing three months' imprisonment for deer-stealing and a fine of three times the damage done.

Here, then, you have a portraiture of that personage whom Shakespeare so grossly travestied. Nor did that impudent ballad suffice to clear the score, for he returned to him in later years, and in the Second Part of *Henry the Fourth* we find "Justice Shallow" at his country house in Gloucestershire, entertaining Sir John Falstaff, and bragging of what a gay dog and a wild fellow he was in his young days in London; "every third word a lie." The "old pike" was, says Falstaff, "like a man made after supper with a cheese-paring," a figure of fun.

"Old pike" gives the key to Shakespeare's meaning, and must at the time have been well understood locally to refer to the luccs, or pike, in the Lucy arms; but, growing bolder, he much more fully, offensively, and unmistakably caricatures Sir Thomas Lucy under the same name of "Justice Shallow" in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*. The play indeed most prominently opens with him represented as having come up to Windsor

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

from Gloucestershire for the purpose of laying an information before the Star Chamber against Sir John Falstaff for having killed his deer—

Shallow. Sir Hugh, persuade me not. I will make a Star-chamber matter of it—if he were twenty Sir John Falstuffs, he shall not abuse Robert Shallow, esquire.

Slender. In the county of Gloster, justice of peace, and *coram*.

Shallow. Ay, Cousin Slender, and *cust-atorum*.

Slender. Ay and *ratorum*, too; and a gentleman born, master parson, who writes himself, *armigero*, in any bill, warrant, quittance, or obligation, *armigero*.

Shallow. Ay, that we do, and have done any time these three hundred years.

Slender. All his successors, gone before him, have done't; and all his ancestors, that come after him, may; they may give the dozen white luses in their coat.

Shallow. It is an old coat.

Evans. The dozen white luses do become an old coat well; it agrees well, passant; it is a familiar beast to man, and signifies love.

Another passage a little later contains an allusion which we try in vain to interpret. What was the story of the keeper's daughter? There is more in this, we may say, than meets the eye. Who knows how the deer-stalking may have been complicated by some incident of a more tender and romantic nature? Keeper's daughters are notoriously comely and buxom, and imagination may frame a pretty story out of this quaint disclaimer of Falstaff's—

Falstaff. How, Master Shallow, you'll complain of me to the king?

Shallow. Knight, you have beaten my me—killed my deer, and broke open my lodge.

Falstaff. But not kissed your keeper's daughter?

Shallow. Tut, a pin! this shall be answer.

Falstaff. I will answer it straight.—I have done all this.—That is now answered.

Shallow. The Council shall know this.

Falstaff. 'Twere better for you, if it were known in counsel; you'll be laughed at.

Falstaff's last remark is a play upon the words "Council," a more or less public body, and "counsel," private talk.

THE OLD COAT OF SHALLOW

That is to say Shallow will be a fool, and laughed at if he takes so trivial an affair before so weighty a tribunal as the Star Chamber, and would be better advised to seek his friends' counsel about the affair.

Perhaps the "keeper's daughter" who was not kissed, was, after all, not kissable, or perhaps the allusion really was an insinuation that Sir Thomas Lucy himself kissed his keeper's daughter. It was in any event obviously a gibe perfectly easy of comprehension at the time in Stratford and round about, and enshrines some forgotten scandalous gossip.

These are passages that the Baconians boggle at. They cannot be explained away by any ingenuity, and thus form a convincing stand-by for those hardened and unrepentant folk who still believe that Shakespeare wrote his own plays. The play upon the name of Lucy and the lues in the family arms is too direct to be mistaken. Master Shallow is a Justice of the Peace in Gloucestershire, and Sir Thomas Lucy was an ornament of the Bench both in that shire and in Warwickshire. The "dozen white louses," instead of the three which would match with the number of lues in the Lucy arms, were no doubt a variant introduced by the dramatist in order to keep himself clear of those very Star Chamber proceedings with which Sir John Falstaff was threatened. One might not in those times defame with impunity a man's coat of arms.

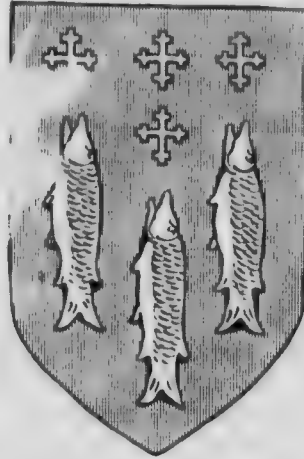
A further objection to the Baconian authorship, if necessary, is to be found in the extreme unlikeliness of Bacon, who himself was armigerous, casting such patent ridicule upon the heraldic achievement of one with whom he had no quarrel. In the case of Shakespeare, the animus is abundantly evident.

The way to Charlecote is over the Clopton Bridge and to the left. It is the Kineton road. Past Tiddington

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

the way goes level, along the beautiful roads shaded by the luxuriant hedgerow timber we expect in these parts; and presently, when we have begun impatiently to wonder when Charlecote will come into view, a lodge and entrance are seen on the left side of the highway.

As for much of the passing shows of this world, but we have often to marvel at their permanence. The old kin of Shakespeare are all gone long ago, but



LUCY SHIELD OF ARMS.

here at Charlecote are still Lucys. There have been Lucys of Charlecote since 1216, and their "old coat" is still displayed over this entrance to the park. They are not, it is true, of the old unmixed blood, and the present family own the name only by adoption, the direct line having been broken in 1786, when a second cousin, the Rev. John Hammond, inherited the property and assumed the name of Lucy. The present owner also, Mr. Fairfax-Lucy, assumed the name on marrying one of the two daughters of Mr. Henry Spenser Lucy, who died in 1890.



FIG. 1. MIDDLEBURY, N. H. - CHAUTAUQUE

THE 'TUMBLE-DOWN STILE'

There are but three luccs, or pikes, in the old coat of the Charlecote Lucys. They are displayed, in herald's language, thus : "gules, semée of crosses crosslet, three luccs hauriant argent;" that is to say, on a red ground sown with silver crosses-crosslet, three silver pike in an upright position, rising to take breath. The family motto is "By truth and diligence." On old deeds sealed with the Lucy seal the three pike are shown intertwined.

The park, well-wooded, but only about 250 acres in extent, presents a fine picture viewed from these gates, but the mansion is not seen; the chief approach being a considerable distance along the main road, and thence along a public by-road to the village of Charlecote. Crossing a bridge over the Wellesbourne stream which joins the Avon in the park, the locally celebrated "Tumble-down Stile" is immediately on the right hand. This is a wooden fence not by its appearance to be distinguished above any other fence of wood, but so contrived that the stranger unversed in its trick, and seeking to climb over it to the footpath beyond, suddenly finds one end collapsing and himself most likely on the ground. This contrivance, generally understood to have been a freak of the late Mr. Henry Spenser Lucy, keeps the village of Charlecote supplied with a stock of elementary humour all the year round, and is invariably pointed out by fly-men driving visitors from Stratford. Not every one who comes to Shakespeare Land comes with the capacity for fully understanding and being interested in its literary and historic features, but all have the comprehension of this within their reach.

There, on the left, stretches the woodland park, entered either by a rough five-barred rustic gate, or by the imposing modern ornamental gates flanked by clumsy sculptured effigies of boars squatting on their

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

rumps. Entering by the unpretending gate first named, one comes beneath the trees of a noble avenue to the beautiful gatehouse standing in advance of the hall and giving admission to a courtyard filled with the geometrical patterns of a formal garden. The wild verdure of the park reigns here, outside that enclosure, and trim neatness forms the note within; a contrast greatly loved in those times when Charlecote was planned. It was to the planning of country mansions exactly what the antithetic manner is to literature: both give the spice of sharp contrast.

There are to this day deer couching in the bracken of the park, and they come picturesquely up to the gatehouse and peer within. There are also strange piebald sheep, with long fat tails, very curious to look upon. I do not know what breed they are, or whence they come, for the reply received to an inquiry elicited this strange answer from a typical Warwickshire boy: "Thaay be Spanish sheep from Scotland." Possibly some of those who read these pages may recognise the kind; but if they came from Spain to Charlecote by way of Scotland they must have been brought somewhat out of their way.

The gatehouse, so strikingly set in advance of the mansion, is the most truly picturesque feature. Its red brick and stone have not been restored, and wear all those signs of age which have been largely smoothed out and obliterated from the residence. Charlecote is not what is known as a "show house." It is not one of those stately mansions which are open to be viewed at stated times; and strangers are admitted only occasionally and by special grace. Long bygone generations of Lucys hang in portraiture by famous masters upon the walls of the great hall, the library, and the drawing-room; and the library contains a copy

CHARLECOTE CHURCH

of the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, published in 1619; an edition which does not contain the opening scene with Mr. Justice Shallow.

Charlecote church was entirely rebuilt in 1852. Surviving views of the former church prove it to have been a small, mean building, unworthy of housing the



THE GATEHOUSE, CHARLECOTE.

fine tombs of the Lucys; and so we need not regret the rebuilding, except to be sorry it was not deferred a few years longer, until the efflorescent would-be Gothic of that period had abated. You who gaze upon the exterior of Charlecote can have not the least doubt about the enthusiasm of the designer, who seems to have been even more Gothic than the architects of the Middle Ages. It is a small church he has designed, but the exterior is overloaded with ornament; and if the building be indeed

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small, the gargoyles are big enough for a cathedral, while the interior has a much-more-than Middle Ages obscurity. It is a church of nave without aisles, and the nave has the unusual feature of being vaulted in stone. It is dark even on a summer day. The architect was also the designer of Bodelwyddan church, in North Wales.

North of the chancel, in a very twilight chapel, are the three ornate tombs of the Lucys. The first of these is of that Sir Thomas who was Shakespeare's "Justice Shallow." It is on the right hand. He lies there, in armoured effigy, beside his wife Joyce, who predeceased him in 1595. He survived until 1600. His bearded face has good features, and he certainly does not in any way look the part of Shallow. Nor does the noble tribute to his wife, inscribed above the monument, proclaim him other than a noble and modest knight—

Here entombed lyeth the Lady Joyce Lucy, wife of Sir Thomas Lucy, of Charlecote, in the county of Warwick, knight, daughter and heir of Thomas Acton, of Sutton, in the county of Worcester, Esquire, who departed out of this wretched world to her Heavenly Kingdom the 10th day of February, in the year of our Lord God, 1595, of her age lx. and iii. All the time of her lyfe, a true and faithful servant of her good God; never detected in any crime or vice; in religion most sound; in love to her husband most faithful and true; in friendship most constant. To what was in trust committed to her most secret. In wisdom excelling; in governing of her house, and bringing up of youth in the fear of God, that did converse with her most rare and singular; greatly esteemed of her betters; misliked of none unless the envious. When all is spoken that can be said; a woman so furnished and garnished with Virtue as not to be bettered, and hardly to be equalled by any; as she lived most virtuously, so she dyed most godly. Set down by him that best did know what hath been written to be true.

THOMAS LUCY.

In front of the monument are little kneeling effigies of Thomas and Anne, the only son and daughter of this pair. On the left is the much more elaborate monument of Sir Thomas the Second, who died, aged fifty-four, in 1605, only five years later than his father. It is a gorgeous Renaissance affair of coloured marbles. This

TOMBS OF THE LUCYS

Sir Thomas lies in effigy alone, his first wife having no part or lot in the monument; the black-vestured and black-hooded kneeling effigy of Constance, his second, mounting guard in front in a very determined fashion. Her back is towards you in entering the chapel, and a very startling creature she is. An amazing line of little



CHARLECOTE.

effigies of their children, each represented kneeling on his or her little hassock, decorates the front of the monument. There are six sons and eight daughters earnestly praying.

The third and last tomb is that of yet another Sir Thomas, third son and successor of the last named. He was killed by a fall from his horse in 1640. He is sculptured beautifully in white marble, and is represented reclining on his elbow. He bears a strong resemblance

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to Charles the First. Beneath is the equally fine effigy of his wife Alice—a lovely work. She is wearing a chain like that of an Order, with a very large and prominent locket, or badge, about the size of an egg, which is, however, quite plain. The significance of it has been wholly lost. On either side of Sir Thomas are panels sculptured in relief: on the left a representation of him galloping on horseback, and on the right shelves of classic authors, possibly to indicate that he was a man of culture and refinement. This beautiful monument was executed in Rome, by Bernini, to the order of Lady Lucy, at a cost of 1500 guineas.

The exterior of this modern church is rapidly weathering, and the over-rich carving of it is being rigorously searched by rains, frosts and thaws. It will be better for sloughing off these florid adornments.

CHAPTER XIII

Shakespeare the countryman.

WE have abundant evidence of Shakespeare the countryman in his works, and of the Warwickshire man some evidences, too. In the splendid speech of the Duke of Burgundy, in *Henry the Fifth*, he makes the Frenchman talk with an appreciation of agricultural disaster which only an English farmer, and a Warwickshire or Gloucestershire farmer, too, could show. In the miseries of France, worsted by war, the Duke speaks thus—

“Her vine, the merry cheerer of the heart,
Unpruned dies : her hedges even-pleach'd,
Like prisoners wildly overgrown with hair,
Put forth disorder'd twigs : her fallow leas
The darnel, hemlock, and rank fumitory,
Doth root upon ; while that the coulter rusts
That should deracinate such savagery :
The even mead, that erst brought sweetly forth
The freckled cowslip, burnet, and green clover,
Wanting the scythe, all uncorrected, rank,
Conceives by idleness ; and nothing teems
But hateful docks, rough thistles, kecksies, burs,
Losing both beauty and utility.”

Bacon would not have made a Frenchman speak with so English a tongue, in the way of the Midlands, nor could he if he would, for he knew no more than the real Burgundy could have known, those details of agricultural life ; and he certainly could not have identified a “ kecksie,” or a “ keck,” as the Warwickshire children still call the hemlock, of whose dried stems they make whistles.

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

"Easy it is of a cut loaf to steal a shive, we know," says Demetrius, in *Titus Andronicus*. That ancient Roman is made to talk like any Warwickshire agricultural labourer who takes his lunch in the hedgerow, off a "shive o' bread, a bit o' cheese or baacon and a drap o' summat; maybe a tot o' cider or maybe a mug of ale." After which he will "shog off" to work again; using in that local word "shog" the expression Shakespeare places in the mouth of Nym, in *Henry the Fifth*. At the close of the day he will be "forewearied," as King John describes himself.

In his plays Shakespeare follows the year all round the calendar and touches every season with magic. You feel convinced, from the sympathy, the joyousness, and the intimate touches, of his country scenes that he was a rustic at heart, and that he must have longed, during those many years when he was winning success in London, to return not only to his native place—to which the heart of every one turns fondly—but to the meadows, the cornfields, the hills and dales and the wild flowers around the town of Stratford-on-Avon. There again, when spring was come, to hear "the sweet bird's note," whether it were "the throstle with his note so true," "the ousel cock so black of hue, with orange tawny bill," "the wren with little quill;"

"The finch, the sparrow, and the lark,
The plain-song cuckoo gray"

or better still the mad joyous outbursts of the skylarks' songs ("And merry larks are ploughmen's clocks") in those wide horizons in May: these, you are certain, were Shakespeare's ideals.

Of all the seasons, although he writes sympathetically of every one, Shakespeare best loved the spring. He is not exceptional in that, for it is the season of hope

SHAKESPEARE AND SPRING

and promise, when the risen sap in the trees makes the leaves unfold and the buds unsheath their beauties, when beasts and birds respond to the climatic change and hibernating small creatures and insects awake from their long sleep; and no less than the trees and plants, the animals and insects, all mankind finds a renewal of life.

"It was a lover and his lass,
With a hey and a ho, and a hey nonino,
That o'er the green cornfield did pass;
In the spring-time, the only merry ring-time,
When birds do sing, hey ding-a-ding,
Sweet lovers love the spring."

Thus the pages sung in the Forest of Arden; and Shakespeare, be sure, put something of himself into the character of Autolycus the pedlar, who after all was a man of better observation, judging by his song, than rogues of his sort commonly be—

"When daffodils begin to peer,—
With hey! the doxy over the dale,—
Why, then comes in the sweet o' the year;
For the red blood reigns in the winter's pale.
The white sheet bleaching on the hedge,—
With hey! the sweet birds, O how they sing!—
Doth set my pugging tooth on edge;
For a quart of ale is a dish for a king.
The lark that tirra-lirra chants,—
With hey! with hey! the thrush and the jay:—
Are summer songs for me and my aunts,
While we lie tumbling in the hay."

Shakespeare, we like to think, had the tenderest feeling for those same daffodils with which Autolycus begins his song; for in lines that are among the most beautiful he ever wrote, he makes Perdita speak of—

"Daffodils,
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty."

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

Here we find, not for once only, Shakespeare and that other sweet singer, Herrick, curiously in sympathy—

"Sweet daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon."

He does not care so ardently for the rose, although he seems, rather indifferently it is true, to admit that it is the queen of flowers. But it delays until summer is upon us. It does not dare with the daffodil.

He returns again and again to the more idyllic simple flowers of nature that the gardener takes no account of. He paints the cowslips in a few words of close observation. They are Queen Mab's pensioners—

"The cowslips tall her pensioners be ;
In their gold coats spots you see ;
Those be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours."

And in every cowslip's ear the fairy hangs a pearl, from her harvest of dew-drops.

Shakespeare's Warwickshire was rich—and it is so still, although it is a very much more enclosed countryside than in his day—in wild-flowers; the gillyflower, the wallflower that loves the nooks and crannies of ruined walls as much as does the jackdaw; the candy-tuft, the foxglove that still stands like a tall floral sentinel in many a hedgerow around Snitterfield; with many another.

"Here's flowers for you ;
Hot lavender, mints, savory, marjoram,
The marigold, that goes to bed with the sun."

The "flowers," however, mentioned in that quotation are, with one exception, herbs. Such as they grace and make fragrant the old gardens of many a cottage the casual tourist never sees. There they have grown for generations, in great clumps and beds; not in meagre and formal patches, as in some "Shakespearean gardens"

OLD-FASHIONED FLOWERS

that could be named. In the byways, in short, where things are not consciously on show, everything is, paradoxically enough, better worth seeing. There the homely virtues of the people are better displayed; the flowers are brighter and their scent sweeter; and there the sun is more mellow. In the byways old mossy walls still stand, russet brown and sere in drought, as though the moss were a dead thing, but green again so soon as ever the rain comes; and old roofs bear the fleshy house-leek in great patches, as though they had burst into some strange vegetable elephantiasis. That is Warwickshire as it is off the beaten track, yonder, at the horizon, where the sky meets the earth: a vague direction, I fancy, but sufficient. We must not divulge all things.

The ragged-robbin that blooms later in every hedge; the "crow-flower" as Shakespeare names it; the "long purple," otherwise the wild arum; pansies—"that's for thoughts"—some call them "love-in-idleness"; all figure in *Hamlet*, where you find a good deal of old country folklore in Ophelia's talk. "Rosemary, that's for remembrance"; fennel and columbines: "there's rue for you; and here's some for me; we may call it herb of grace o' Sundays;—you may wear your rue with a difference."

There is sometimes an almost farmer-like practical philosophy underlying his observation, as where Biron says, in *Love's Labour's Lost*: "Allons allons! sow'd cockle reap'd no corn"; and in *King Lear*, in the reference to—

"Darnel, and all the idle weeds that grow
In our sustaining corn."

The corn-cockle is of course better known as the "corn-flower," whose beautiful blue is so contrasting a colour

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with the scarlet of the poppies, that equally fail to win the farmer's admiration.

But the greater the study we give to Shakespeare and his treatment of flowers, the more evident it becomes that his sympathies were all with the earlier, spring-time blossoms that dare, not quite with the daffodils, but soon after the roaring ides of March are overpast. Thus, he makes Perdita resume, with—

"Violets dim,
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes
Or Cytherea's breath; pale primroses
That die unmarried ere they can behold
Bright Phoebus in his strength."

The "daisies pied," the "lady-smocks all silver-white," that is to say, the white arabis which the Warwickshire children of to-day call "smell-smocks," and the "cuckoo buds of yellow hue," otherwise the buttercups, out of which the cuckoo is in old folklore supposed to drink, he tells us, all "paint the meadows with delight." He could never have written those lines with care and thought and in cold blood: he must have seen those meadows with all the delight he expresses, and the words themselves must needs have been penned with enthusiasm. This is a thesis easily susceptible of proof. The lovely cuckoo-song at the close of *Love's Labour's Lost*, which with a charm unmatched tells us of those flower-spangled meads, has no bearing upon the action of the play: it is written in sheer enjoyment, and it is in the same spirit that his other allusions to the fields and hedgerows and woodlands, the "bosky acres" and the "unshrubbed down," are conceived. Ariel, that tricky sprite of *The Tempest*, is a true countryman's fancy, as clearly to be seen in the lines—

"Where the bee sucks, there suck I,
In a cowslip's bell I lie;
There I couch when owls do cry,
On the bat's back I do fly."

THE DINGLES

Here, as often elsewhere, the dramatist and the poet are at odds. Shakespeare the actor-playwright, with every necessity of the stage—its entrances and exits, and the imperative need for the action of the play to be maintained—halts the story so that the other Shakespeare, the idyllic poet, the lover of nature, shall picture some scene for which he cares everything, but which to the Greeks—for Greeks here read the London playgoers of his time—must have meant foolishness.

Such an instance, among many, is Oberon's speech to Puck, in *Midsummer Night's Dream*—

"I know a bank whereon the wild thyme blows,
Where ox-lips and the nodding violet grows;
Quite over-canopied with lush woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine:
There sleeps Titania!"

For these lines and such as these Shakespeare risked the brickbats, the cat-calls and the obloquy that awaited the dramatist whose action dragged. There is no excuse for them—except that of their beauty, and that to the groundlings was less than nothing.

That bank whereon the wild-thyme grew must have been, I like to think, somewhere in The Dingles, a curious spot just north-east of Stratford, to the left of the Warwick road, as you go up to Welcombe. I think there are no "dingles" anywhere nearer London than the midlands; none in name, although there may be many in fact. By a "dingle" in the midlands a deep narrow vale, or natural gully is meant. The word is especially well known in Shropshire and the Welsh borders, where such features, between the enfolding hills, are plentiful. Here The Dingles are abrupt and deeply winding gullies, breaking away from the red earth of the Welcombe uplands: a very tumbled and unspoiled spot. Elms look down from the crest of

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them, and ancient thorn-trees line their sides. It seems quite a sure and certain thing that Shakespeare when a boy knew this spot well and frequented it with the other Stratford boys of his age; catching, perhaps the "earth-delving conies," and I am afraid—for all boys are cruel except those in the Sunday-school books, and they are creatures in the nature of sucking Galahads imagined by maiden aunts—I am afraid, I say, also birds'-nesting.

The Dingles, doubtless, formed in Shakespeare's mind the site of Titania's bower. Perhaps you may find it yourself, if you seek there, somewhere about midsummer midnight, in the full of the moon, when possibly her obedient fairies will be as kind and courteous as of old to that gentleman who has the good fortune to discover the magic spot, and may—

"Hop in his walks, and gambol in his eyes;
Feed him with apricocks and dewberries,
With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries."

If these adventures do befall you, tell no one; for you will not find belief, even in this same Shakespeare land.

It is, however, much more likely that your walk will be solitary, and that for the apricots and grapes you will have to wait until you have returned to your hotel in the town.

The last two years of Shakespeare's life were concerned with a heated local question: none other than that of the proposed enclosure of the Welcombe common fields, including The Dingles, by William Combe who had by the death of his father become squire of Welcombe and had at once entered into an agreement with the lord of the manor and other landholders to enclose the land. The corporation and townsfolk of Stratford were bitterly opposed to this encroachment. Shakespeare's interest in the matter appears to have been only that

THE LAND-GRABBERS

of an owner of tithes in these fields, and his sympathies were clearly against any such extension of private rights. An entry under date of September 1615 among others in the still-existing manuscript diary of Thomas Greene, then clerk to the corporation, who calls Shakespeare his cousin, is to the effect that Shakespeare told J. Greene (brother of the town clerk) that he—Shakespeare—"was not able to bear the enclosing of Welcombe." The ambiguous and ungrammatical wording of Greene's diary often renders his meaning obscure and has caused a great conflict of opinion about Shakespeare's attitude in this affair, some reading it as in favour of the enclosure. It really appears to have been one of benevolent neutrality, and could scarcely have been otherwise. He himself was a neighbouring landowner, and friendly with others, but sentimentally, he looked with aversion upon those proposed doings. He "was not able to bear" the enclosure of the place he had roamed when a boy, but that did not give him the right to intervene at law. The corporation went to law with Combe and his fellows and won their case, but by that time Shakespeare had passed from these transient scenes. To this day The Dingles is common land.

CHAPTER XIV

The 'Eight Villages'—'Piping' Pebworth and 'Dancing' Marston.

No one who has ever sojourned in Shakespeare land can remain in ignorance of what are the "Eight Villages." The older rhymes upon them are printed upon picture-postcards, and on fancy chinaware, and reprinted in every local guide-book; and now I propose to repeat them, not only for their own sake and for the alleged Shakespearean authorship, but because the pilgrimage of those villages offers many points of interest. One need offer no excuse for this descriptive chapter, because although the rhymes themselves are trite, the places are by no means so well known; your average Shakespeare Country tourist being rarely so enterprising as he is commonly—and quite erroneously—supposed to be. Stratford-on-Avon, Evesham, Warwick, Kenilworth and Coventry, with their comfortable hotels, furnish forth the average pilgrim. But if you are to know Shakespeare land intimately, and if you would come into near touch with the poet and know him at closest quarters, you must linger in the villages that in every circumstance of picturesqueness are dotted about the valley of the Avon. There, as freshly as ever, when spring has not waned too far into summer, the

"Daisies pied and violets blue,
And ladysmocks all silver-white,
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue,
Do paint the meadows with delight."

"Shakespeare is Bacon," dogmatically asserts the

THE TOPERS AND THE SIPPERS

ancient hyphenated baronet who in these latter days posts pamphlets broadcast (incidentally favouring me with one, uninvited) seeking to dethrone our sovereign bard. Well, let who will cherish the impious opinion; but all the countryside around Stratford disproves it; the trees, the fields, the wild flowers, the rustic talk, which Bacon could never have known, that are all faithfully mirrored in the plays.

But let us to the Eight Villages, whose fame rests upon a legend of olden drinking-bouts and of competitions between different towns and villages, to decide whose men could drink the most liquor. In Shakespeare's time, it seems, Bidford held the championship of all this countryside, and had two valiant coteries of tipplers who drank not only for their own personal gratification, but went beyond that and inconvenienced themselves for the honour and glory of their native place. Further than this, local patriotism cannot go. So famous were the doings of the Topers and the Sippers of this spot that it became familiarly known as "Drunken" Bidford; an unfortunate adjective, for it was bestowed not by any means because those convivial clubmen could not carry their liquor like men, but was intended as a direct tribute of admiration to their capacity for it. In short, such was their prowess that they went forth, conquering and to conquer, in all the surrounding villages. On an historic occasion the daring fellows of Stratford went forth and challenged the Bidford men on their own ground, Shakespeare traditionally among them. The Topers were not at home; they had gone to drink Evesham dry; but the Sippers held the fort and duly maintained the honour of Bidford. At the "Falcon" inn the contest was waged, and the Stratford men were ignominiously worsted, drawing off from the stricken field while yet there remained some

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with full command of their legs, and ability to carry away those of their number who had wholly succumbed. In this sort they went the homeward way towards Stratford, which is more than six miles distant, but they had proceeded no further than three-quarters of a mile when they sank down by the roadside and slept there the night, under a large crab-apple tree. When morning dawned—when night's candles were burned out and jocund day stood tiptoe on the meadows—they arose refreshed, the majority eager to return to Bidford and try another bout; but Shakespeare refused. He had had enough of it. He had drunk with —

“Piping Pebworth, Dancing Marston,
Haunted Hillborough, Hungry Grafton,
Dodging Exhall, Papist Wixor’,
Beggarly Broom, and Drunken Bidford.”

Such is the legend. There are those who believe it, and there are again those who do not. The quatrain does not seem to fit in with the story, and indeed bears evidence of being one of those injurious rhymes respecting neighbouring and rival villages fairly common throughout England, often reflecting severely, not only upon the characteristics of those places, but also upon the moral character of their inhabitants. Indeed, the present rhymes are mildness itself compared with some, with which these pure pages shall not be sullied. But although we may not place much faith in the Shakespearean ascription, those go, surely, too far who refuse to believe Shakespeare capable of taking part in one of these old-time drinking-bouts. Shakespeare, we are nowadays told, could not have descended to such conduct; but in holding such a view we judge the poet and the times in which he lived by the standards of our own age; a very gross fallacy indeed. It is not, nowadays, “respectable” for any one, no matter the height

PIPING PEBWORTH

or the obscurity of his status, to drink more than enough; but he who in those times shirked his drink was accounted a very sorry fellow. What says Sir Toby Belch, in *Twelfth Night*? "He is a coward and a coystil that will not drink till his brains turn o' the toe like a parish top." To this day, in the banqueting-room of Haddon Hall, we may see what the jovial souls who were contemporary with Shakespeare did to the man who could not or would not finish his tankard. There is an ingenious handcuff in the panelling of that apartment in which the wrist of such an one was secured, and down his sleeve the drink he had declined was poured. Nay, only a hundred and fifty years ago, the hospitable hosts and the best of good fellows were those to whom it was a point of honour to see that their guests were made, in the modern police phrase, "drunk and incapable," so that they had to be carried up to bed. Mr. Pitt did not commonly get much "forrarder" on three bottles of port, and generally made his best speeches in the House when, having generously exceeded that allowance, he was quite drunk. Mr. Fox was a worthy fellow to him. Nobody thought the worse of them—in fact, rather the better—for it. To be drunk was the mark of a gentleman; to be excessively drunk—the very apogee of inebriety—was to be "as drunk as a lord"; no man could do more.

The villages whose bygone outstanding features are thus rhythmically celebrated are scattered to the west and south-west of Stratford-on-Avon, between six and eight miles distant; the two first-named in that wide-spreading level which stretches almost uninterruptedly between that town and Evesham. Pebworth, whose name would seem to enshrine the personal name of some Saxon landowner—"Pebba's weorth"—is quite exceptionally placed on a steep and sudden hill that rises rather

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

dramatically from the level champaign. There is more than a thought too much of new building and of corrugated tin roofing about the Pebworth of to-day, and when I came up along the village street a steam-roller was engaged in compacting the macadam of the roadway. I thought sadly that it was not at all Shakespearean; yet, you know, had the roads been of your true Shake-



"PIPING PEBWORTH."

spearean early seventeenth-century sort, one would not have penetrated to these scenes with a bicycle at all. No one pipes nowadays at Pebworth; there is not even a performer on the penny whistle to sound a note, in evidence of good faith. It is a pretty enough village, but not remarkably so, and offers the illustrator the smallest of chances, for the church which crowns the hill-top is so encircled with trees that only the upper part of its tower is visible. The church, in common with nearly all the village churches within the Shakespeare

DANCING MARSTON

radius, is locked, doubtless with a view to extracting a sixpence from the amiable tourist. Old tombstones to a Shackel, Shekel or Shackle family—the name is spelled in many ways—abound here.

Long Marston lies in the midst of this pleasant, level country, six miles south-west of Stratford-on-Avon, and on a yet somewhat secluded road; its old-time retirement that recommended it to the advisers of the fugitive Charles the Second, when seeking a way for him to escape from the country after the defeat of his hopes at the Battle of Worcester, September 3rd, 1651, being little changed. Marston is the only village I have ever known which owns three adjectives to its name. "Long," Marston is the better known of them; "Dancing" Marston is another, and "Dry" Marston—or "Marston Sicca," as the pedantic old topographers of some two centuries ago styled it—forms the third. Whatever fitness may once have attached to the sobriquet of "Dancing" has long since disappeared, nor are the traditions of its olden morris-dancers one whit more marked than those of any other village. In the days when Marston danced, the neighbouring villages footed it with equally light heart and light heels, so far as we can tell. "Dry" Marston, too, forms something of a puzzle to the observer, who notes not only that it is low-lying and that the little Dorsington Brook meanders close at hand on the map, in company with other rills, but also observes that a stone-paved causeway extends for a considerable distance along the road at the northern end of the village; evidently provided against flooded and muddy ways. Finally, if "Marston" does not derive from "marshtown," then there is nothing at all in derivatives. We are thus reduced to the better-known name, "Long" Marston.

Doubtless the stranger expects to find a considerable



C. S. MARSH

"DANCING MARSTON."

CHARLES THE SECOND

village, with a long-drawn street of cottages; but Marston is not in the least like that. Instead, you find ancient half-timbered and thatched cottages, scattered singly, or in groups of two or three, fronting upon the level road, each situated in its large garden, where it seems as much a product of the soil as the apples and pears, or the more homely cabbages, beans, and potatoes, and appears almost to have grown there, equally with them. A branch line of the Great Western Railway, it is true, runs by, with a station, but at Long Marston station the world goes easily and leisurely; sparrows chirp in the waiting-room and rabbits sport along the line; while such work as goes on in the goods-yard is punctuated by yawns and illuminative anecdotes. All this by way of praising these old-world surroundings.

Among the cottages is an older whitewashed group, set back from the road. In pre-Reformation times this was the Priest's House. Across the way stands the pretty little fourteenth-century church, with little of interest within, but possessing a fine timbered north porch of the same period, the timbering at this present time of writing being again exposed to view after having been covered up with plaster for more than a century.

It was on the evening of September 10th, the seventh day after the disastrous Battle of Worcester, that King Charles and his two companions, Mr. Lassels and Jane Lane, came to Long Marston and found shelter at the house of Mr. John Tomes. The King was in the character of "Will Jackson," servant of Mistress Jane Lane; in that capacity riding horseback in front of her, while she rode pillion behind him. We may readily picture the King, in his servant's disguise, kept in his proper place in the kitchen, while Lassels and Jane Lane were entertained by the master of the house in the best parlour. Blount, in his *Boscobel*, published in 1660, the

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

year of the Restoration, illuminates this historic incident with an anecdote that gives the brief sojourn at Long Marston as piquant and homely a savour as that of King Alfred's burning the cakes in the cottage where he was in hiding, away down in the Somersetshire Isle of Athelney, nearly eight hundred years before the troubles of the Stuarts were heard of. Supper was being prepared for Mr. Tomes' guests, and the cook asked "Will Jackson" to wind up the roasting-jack. "Will Jackson," says Blount, "was obedient, and attempted it, but hit not the right way, which made the maid in some passion ask, 'What countryman are you, that you know not how to wind up a jack?' To which Charles, who was ever blessed with that happy quality the French call *esprit*, for which we have no exactly corresponding word, replied, 'I am a poor tenant's son of Colonel Lane, in Staffordshire; we seldom have roast meat, and when we have, we don't make use of a jack.'"

Every one in Long Marston can point out "King's Lodge," as this historic house is now known. Somewhat altered, externally and internally, but still in possession of descendants of the John Tomes who sheltered the King after Worcester Fight, it still retains the famous roasting-jack, now carefully preserved in a glass-case, in the room that was in those times a kitchen, and later became a cider cellar, and is now the dining-room.

The Tomes family—who pronounce their name "Tombs," and have many kinsfolk who also spell it in that fashion—have a curious and dismal pictorial pun upon their ancient patronymic, by way of coat of arms. It represents three white altar-tombs on a green ground; to speak in the language of heraldry: Vert, three tombstones argent.

John Tomes suffered for his loyalty. Some of his lands were sequestrated and he was obliged to leave the

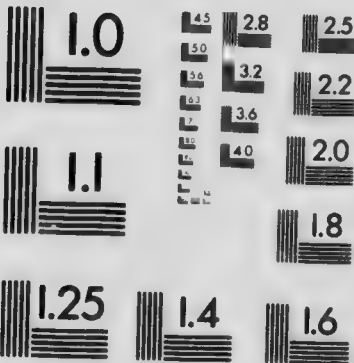


DINING-ROOM, FORMERLY THE KITCHEN, KING'S LODGE.



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SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

country; nor did the Royal favour subsequently shown his family advantage them very greatly; the liberty granted them of hunting, hawking and fishing from Long Marston to Crab's Cross, in the neighbourhood of Redditch, being, it may well be supposed, of little value.

Although, as already noted, changes have been made at "King's Lodge," one may yet, in the quaint dining-room which was then the kitchen, sit in the ingle-nook of the great fireplace, in which it may be supposed "Will Jackson," having doubtless kissed the cook—if indeed, she were a kissable cook—and thus made amends for his unhandiness with the roasting-jack, was afterwards allowed a seat.

CHAPTER XV

The 'Eight Villages' (*concluded*).

'Haunted' Hillborough, 'Hungry' Grafton,
'Dodging' Exhall, 'Papist' Wixford,
'Beggarly' Broom, and 'Drunken' Bidford.

"HAUNTED Hillborough," which comes next in order in this rhymed survey, is geographically remote from Long Marston, not so much in mere mileage, for it is not quite three miles distant, measured in a straight line, but it is situated on the other, and Warwickshire, side of the Avon, at a point where the river is not bridged. In short, the traveller from Long Marston to Hillborough will scarcely perform the journey under six miles, going by way of Dorsington and Barton, always along crooked roads, and thence through Bidford. Dorsington is an entirely pretty and extremely small village with a church noticeable only for the whimsical smallness of its red-brick Georgian tower. Why, in a lesser-known local rhyme, which does not find celebrity upon postcards and fancy articles at Stratford-on-Avon, Dorsington should be known as "Daft" is more than I can say; unless it be that the facile alliteration is irresistible. There are reasons sufficient for this lack of popularity, in the lines in which Dorsington's name occurs—

"Daft Dorsington, Lousy Luddington,
Welford for witches, Binton for bitches,
An' Weston at th' end of th' 'orld."

Barton, through which we come into Bidford, is, as might perhaps be suspected from its name, merely a

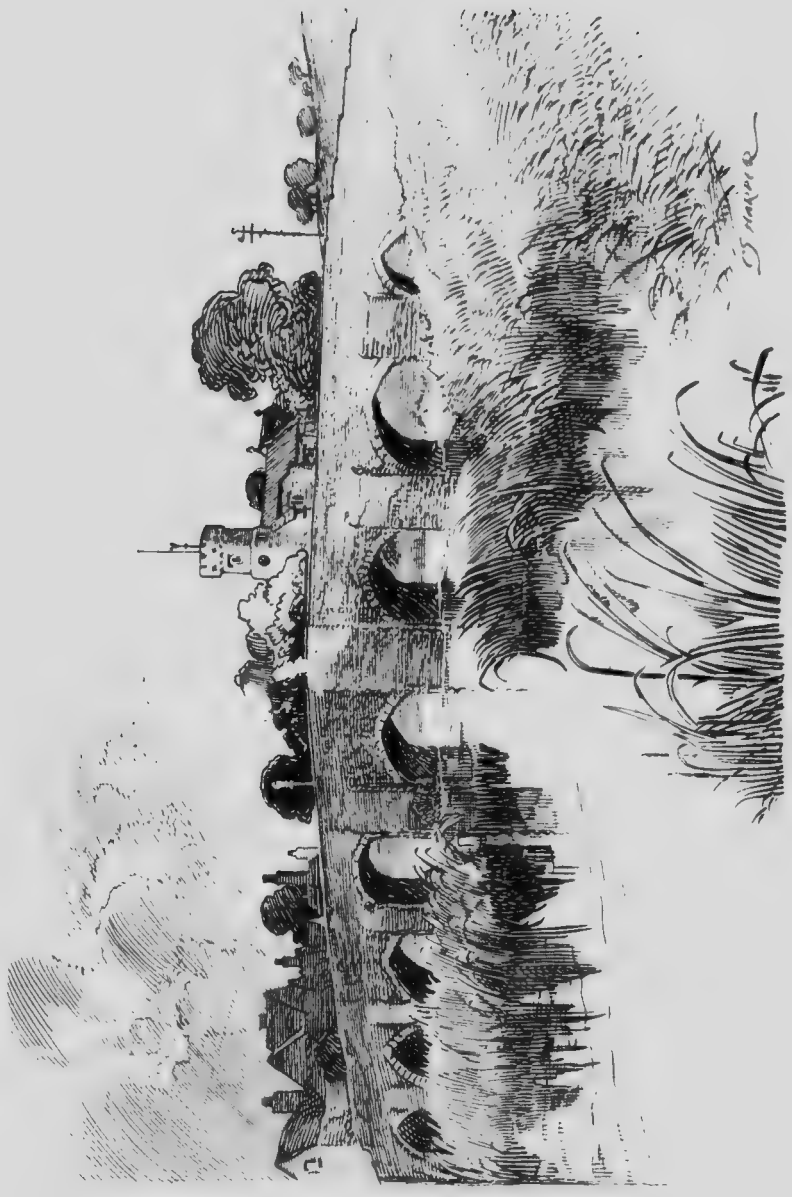
SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

rustic hamlet, for "barton" is but the old English word for a cow-byre or a barn. It is that "Burton Heath" mentioned in the *Taming of the Shrew*, of which Christopher Sly, "old Sly's son," "by birth a pedlar, by education a card-maker, by transmutation a bear-herd, and now by present profession a tinker," was a native.

From Barton we cross the Avon into Bidford over an ancient bridge of eight arches built in 1482 by the brethren of Alcester priory to replace the ford by which travellers along the Ryknield Street had up to that time crossed the river. The eight arches of Bidford achieve the rather difficult feat of being each of a different shape and size, and the heavy stonework itself has been extensively patched with brick. Here the Avon is encumbered with eyots and rushes, very destructive to the navigation, but affording very useful foregrounds for the illustrator.

Bidford is wholly on the further, or Warwickshire, side of the river, and is a rather urban-looking place of one very long and narrow street. It has a population of over a thousand, and thus, I believe, comes under the official definition of a "populous place," whose inns and public-houses are permitted to remain open until 11 p.m., which may or may not be a consideration here. The inns of Bidford are numerous, but they do not appear to enjoy their former prosperity. I adventured into one of them one thirsty summer day, for the purpose of sampling some of the "perry" advertised for sale within. There was no joy in the sour sorry stuff it proved to be. You get quite a quantity of it for three-halfpence; but it is odds against your drinking half of it. The landlady dolefully spoke of the state of trade. She had not taken half-a-crown that day. Truly, the glories of Bidford have departed!

The old "Falcon" inn, an inn no longer, nor for



"DRUNKEN BIDEFORD."

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

many years past, stands in the midst of this very considerable village, close by the parish church, whose odd and not beautiful tower forms a prominent object in the view from the bridge. It is not in the least worth while to enter that church, for it has been almost wholly rebuilt. The nave has a ceiling, and there are deal doors, painted and grained to resemble oak. The chancel, reconstructed in the more florid and unre-



THE "FALCON," BIDFORD.

strained period of the Gothic revival, is a lamentable specimen of architectural zeal not according to discretion.

It is nearly a century since the "Falcon" ceased to be an inn. It then became a workhouse, and thus many a boozy old reprobate whose courses at the "Falcon" had brought him to poverty ended his days under the same roof. Cynic Fortune, turned moralist and temperance lecturer, surely was never in a more saturnine humour!

The old sign of the inn eventually found its way to Shakespeare's birthplace. It pictured a golden falcon on a red ground, and bore additionally the arms of



"HAUNTED HILLBOROUGH."

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SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

the Skipwith family, the chief landowners in Bidford. With the sign went an old chair in which Shakespeare is traditionally said to have sat. To-day the "Falcon" is let in tenements, and also houses the village reading-room and library. The building deserves a better fate, for, as will be noted from the accompanying illustration, it has that quality, as admirable in architecture as in men, character. It is of two distinct styles: the half-timbered gable noted along the street being doubtless the oldest portion, apparently of the mid-fifteenth century. This would seem to be the original inn. The main block seems to be about a century later, and would thus have been a recent building in Shakespeare's youth. It was added apparently at a period of unbounded prosperity and is wholly of stone. The stone is of that very markedly striated blue lias much used in this district, and is set in a traditional fashion once greatly followed, that is to say, in alternate narrow and broad bands or courses.

Proceeding from Bidford along the Stratford road for Hillborough the haunted, the site of the ancient crab-apple tree is found, where the defeated Stratfordians slept off the effects of their carouse. The road is hedged now and the fields enclosed and cultivated, but in Shakespeare's time the way was open. The spot is marked on Ordnance maps as "Shakespeare's Crab," and although the ancient tree finally disappeared in a venerable age on December 4th, 1824, when its remains, shattered in storms and hacked by relic-hunters, were carted off to Bidford Grange, a younger tree of the same genus has been planted on the identical site. We may note the spot, interested and unashamed, because although the rhymes upon the eight villages are almost certainly not Shakespeare's—though probably quite as old as his period—that is no reason for doubting the

HAUNTED HILLBOROUGH

poet's taking part in the drinking contest. "Because thou art virtuous, shall there be no cakes and ale?" and because we do not follow the customs of our ancestors shall we think them in their generation—and Shakespeare with them—disreputable? I think not, although, with these things in mind, I live in daily expectation of an article in some popular journal, asking, "Was Shakespeare Respectable?" I think the poet was,



"HAUNTED HILLBOROUGH."

apart from his literary genius, an average man, with the weaknesses of such; and all the more lovable for it.

Hillborough is reached by turning in a further mile to the right, off the high road, at a point where a meadow is situated locally known as "Palmer's Piece." Palmer, it appears, was a farmer who drowned his wife in the Avon, and was gibbeted on this spot for the crime.

A mile's journey along narrow roads, down towards the river, brings the pilgrim to Hillborough. Now Hillborough is not a village: it is not even a hamlet,

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

and is indeed nothing but the remaining wing of an old manor-house, now a farm, and in a very solitary situation. It will thunder and lighten, and rain heavily when you go to Hillborough—it always does when you seek interesting places in remote spots—but these conditions seem only the more appropriate to the haunted reputation of the scene: although what was the nature of the hauntings has eluded every possible inquiry.



"HUNGRY GRAFTON."

It is thus curiously and wholly in keeping that the old manor-house and its surroundings should look so eerie. Noble trees romantically overhang the house; remains of old buildings whose disappearance mournful ghosts might grieve over, lend a dilapidated air of the *Has Been* to the place; and an ancient circular stone pigeon-house, a relic of the former manor, stands beside a dismal pond. But the ghosts have ceased to walk.

A mile and a half across the Stratford road, is situated the fourth of these eight villages, "Hungry" Grafton. The real name of the place is Temple Grafton. "Hungry"

HUNGRY GRAFTON

is said to be an allusion to a supposed poverty of the soil, but farmers of this neighbourhood, although fully as dissatisfied as you expect a farmer to be, do not lend much help to the stranger seeking information. "I've varmed wuss land an' I've 'armed better," was the eminently non-committal reply of one; while another was of the opinion that "it 'on't break us, nor yet it 'on't make us."

The Shakespearean tourist will not be pleased with Grafton, for the squire of the adjoining Grafton Court practically rebuilt the whole village some forty years ago. It is true that was not a heroic undertaking, for it is a small village, but the doing of it very effectually quenches the traveller's enthusiasm. Even the church was rebuilt in 1773: a peculiarly unfortunate thing, because the old building was one of those for which claim was made for having been the scene of Shakespeare's marriage, that elusive ceremony of which no register survives to bear witness. It is only in practical, unsentimental England that these things are at all possible. A furious desire to obliterate every possible Shakespearean landmark would almost seem to have possessed the people of the locality, until quite recent years. Grafton, whose "Temple" prefix derives from the manor having anciently been one of the possessions of the Knights Templar, stands on a hill. The site is thought to have been covered in olden times with scrub-woods, "Grafton" or "Greveton," taking its name from "greves"; a word signifying underwoods. Similar place-names are found in Northamptonshire, in Grafton Regis and Grafton Underwood, situated in Whittlebury Forest.

The only possible picture in "Hungry" Grafton is that sketched here, from below the ridge, where a brook runs beneath the road, beside a group of red-brick

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

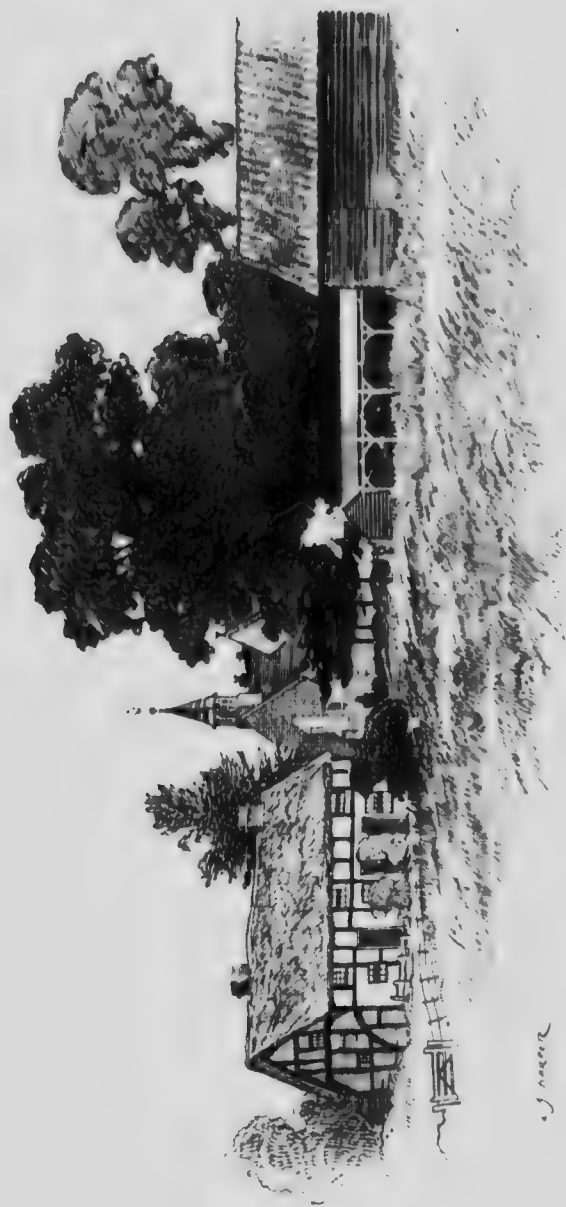
cottages. If you ascend the road indicated here and pass the highly uninteresting church and schools, you come to the hamlet of Ardens Grafton, a very much more gracious and picturesque place, although in extremely tumbledown and dilapidated circumstances. It is very much of a woodland hamlet, and appears to owe the first part of its name rather to that circumstance than to ownership at any time by the Arden



THE HOLLOW ROAD, EXHALL.

family: Ardens in this case signifying a bright overlooking a wooded Vale.

The situation of the place does in fact most aptly illustrate the derivation, for it stands upon a very remarkable ridge, which must needs be descended by a steep and sudden hill if we want to reach Exhall. Descending the almost precipitous and narrow road with surprise, the nearly cliff-like escarpment is seen trending away most strikingly to the north. We are now in the valley of the river Arrow. On the way to



"PAUSE WINTHROP"

of nature

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

Exhall we come—not led by Caliban—to “where crabs grow,” for the hedgerows here are remarkable for the number of crab-apple trees. Shakespeare must have had them in mind when he wrote *The Tempest*. Exhall lies in a beautiful country, on somewhat obscure byways that may have given the place that elusive character with strangers to which it owes its nickname of “Dodging”: although, to be sure there are the other readings of “Dadging,” whose meaning no one seems to comprehend; and “Drudging,” which it is held is the true epithet, given in allusion to the heavy ploughlands of the vale. Yet another choice has been found, in “Dudging,” supposed to mean “sulky”: but the ingenuity of commentators in these things is endless. There is, at any rate, in coming from Ardens Grafton, no modern difficulty in finding Exhall. It is a little village of large farms, with a small aisleless Early English and Decorated church whose interest has been almost wholly destroyed by the so-called “restoration” of 1863. A window with the ball-flower moulding characteristic of the Decorated period remains in the south wall, and there are brasses to John Walsingham, 1566, and his wife; but for the rest, the stranger within these gates need not regret the church being locked, in common with most others in Shakespeare land. The hollow road at Exhall, with high, grassy banks and the group of charming old half-timbered cottages illustrated here is a delight. The builder who built them—they are certainly at least a century older than Shakespeare—built more picturesquely than he knew, with those sturdy chimney-stacks and the long flight of stairs ascending from the road.

There are orchards at Exhall where I think the “leather-coats” such as Davy put before Shallow’s guests yet grow: they are a russet apple, and, like the



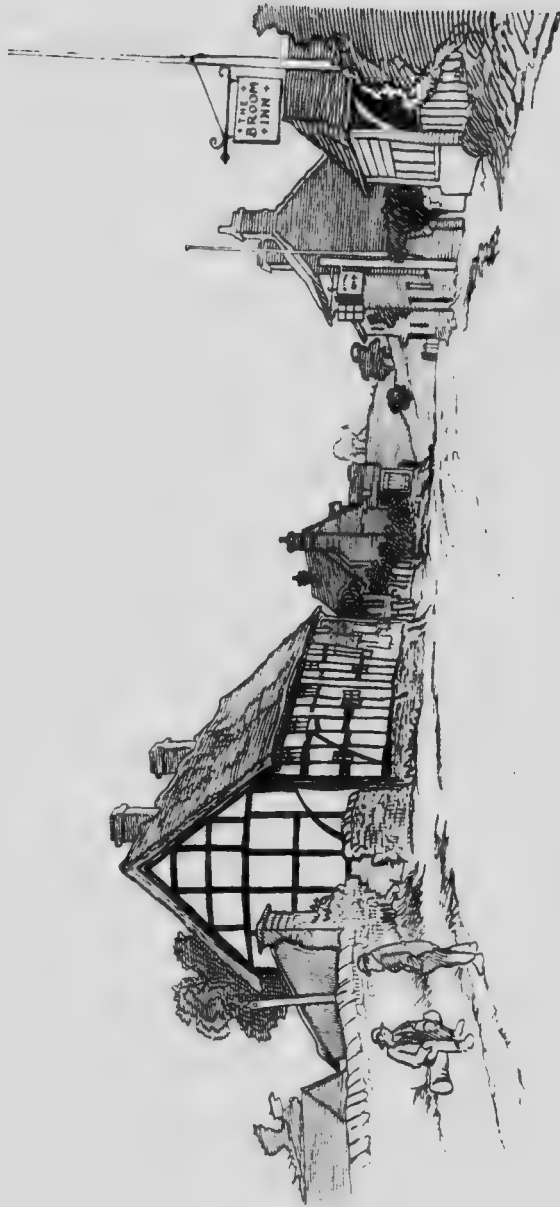
BRASS TO THOMAS DE CRUWE AND WIFE, WIXFORD.

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

"bitter-sweeting," own a local name which Shakespeare, the Warwickshire countryman, knew well enough, but of whose existence Bacon could have known nothing. What says Mercutio to Romeo? "Thy wit is a very bitter sweeting: it is a most sharp sauce." And if you, tempted by the beautiful yellow of that apple, pick one and taste it, you will find the bitterness of it bite to the very bone.

Exhall takes the first part of its name, "ex," from the Celtic word *uisg*, for water: a word which has given the river Exe its name, and masquerades elsewhere as Ouse, Exe, Usk, Esk, and so forth. But the river Arrow is a mile distant, and Wixford, which comes next, whose boundaries extend to that stream, is much better entitled to its name, which was originally "uisg-ford," meaning "water-ford."

"Papist" Wixford is said to have derived its nickname from the Throckmortons, staunch Roman Catholics, who once owned property here. The Arrow runs close by the scattered cottages of this tiny place, which might be styled merely a hamlet, except that it has a parish church of its own. A delightful little church it is, too, placed on a ridge and neighboured only by some timber-framed cottages. Luxuriant elms group nobly with it, and in the churchyard is a very large and handsome yew-tree, whose spreading branches, perhaps more symmetrical than those of any other yew of its size in this country, are supported at regular intervals by timber struts, forming a curious and notable sight. There are monumental brasses in the little church; by far the best of them, however, is the noble brass to Thomas de Cruwe and his wife Juliana, appropriately placed in the south chapel that was founded by him. Thomas de Cruwe—whose name was really "Crewe," only our ancestors were used to spell phonetically—was scarcely



"BEGGARLY BROOM."

C. J. HARRIS

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

the warlike knight he would, from his plate-armour and mighty sword, appear to be. He was, in fact, chief steward to Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, and attorney to the Countess Margaret, widow of his predecessor. He was, further, a "Knight of the Shire," or member of Parliament, in 1404, and Justice of the Peace; and having filled these various professional and official positions, let us hope with as much satisfaction to his employers and others as obviously to his own advantage, he died at last in his bed, as all good lawyers, even of his date, the beginning of the fifteenth century, ought to do, in the year 1418. The date of his death is, however, not mentioned on the brass, the blanks in the inscription, left for the purpose, having never been filled. His wife Juliana, who had been the widow of one of the Cloptons, predeceased him, in 1411, and Thomas de Cruwe caused this beautiful and costly brass to be engraved in his own lifetime. The incomplete inscription is by no means unusual, numerous brasses throughout the country displaying similar unfilled spaces; pointing to the indifference with which the date of departure of the dear departed was all too often regarded by their more or less sorrowing heirs, executors, and assigns.

This splendidly-engraved brass, which ranks among the largest and finest in England, is mounted on a raised slab measuring nine by four feet; the effigies five feet in height. A curious error of the engraver of this monument is to be noted, in the omission of Thomas de Cruwe's sword-belt or baldrick, by which the sword hanging from his waist has no visible means of support. The odd badge—apparently unique in heraldry—of a naked human left foot is seen many times repeated on the brass. No explanation of it seems ever to have been offered. We might have expected a cock in the

BEGGARLY BROOM

act of crowing, for "Crewe," for our ancestors dearly loved puns upon family names and were never daunted by the vapidty or appalling stupidity of them; but in this case they forbore.

The penultimate village of these rhymes, "Beggarly" Broom, also stands upon the Arrow. Marston, as we have seen, dances no more, nor does Pebworth pipe; the supernatural no longer vexes Hillborough, and Grafton is not so hungry as you might suppose. Exhall is not difficult to find, and there are not any Roman Catholics at Wixford; while Bidford is not obviously drunken. But Broom is just as beggarly as ever.

Broom was originally a hamlet of squatters on a gorsy, or broom-covered heath, and a hamlet it yet remains. Modern times have brought Broom a railway junction and a bridge across the Arrow, where was until recently only a ford; but Broom is not to be moved into activity by these things, or anything. Anglers come by cheap tickets from Birmingham and fish in the Arrow, and swap lies at the "Hollybush" and "Broom" inns about what they have caught, but there still is that poverty-stricken air about the place which originally attracted the notice of the rhymester, centuries ago. A flour-mill, still actively at work by the river, and a new house being built, do little to qualify this ancient aspect of squalid decay, which seems to extend even to the inhabitants, who may be observed sitting stolidly and abstractedly, as though contemplating the immensities. They are probably only wondering whence to-morrow's dinner is coming, a branch of philosophical inquiry of poignant interest.

CHAPTER XVI

The 'Swan's Nest' — Haunted? — Clifford Chambers — Wincot—
Quinton, and its club day.

TWELVE miles south of Stratford, across the level lands of the Feldon, you come to Chipping Campden, perched upon the outlying hills of the Cotswold country. The inevitable way southward out of Stratford town lies over the Clopton Bridge, and then, having crossed the Avon, the roads diverge. To the left you proceed for Charlecote and Kington; straight ahead for Banbury and London; and to the right for Chipping Campden or for Shipston-on-Stour. The point where these roads branch and go their several ways was until recently a very charming exit from or entrance to the town. Here stands the old inn, the "Swan's Nest," *ex* "Shoulder of Mutton," by the waterside, and opposite are the grounds of the old manor-house, enclosed behind lofty and massive brick walls.

The "Swan's Nest" is a red-brick house of good design, built in 1677, when an excellent taste in architecture prevailed. The sign was then the "Bear," a very usual name in these marches of the Warwick influence. It arose upon the site of a hermitage and Chapel of St. Mary Magdalene that had long subsisted upon the alms of travellers this way, generations before Sir William Clopton built his bridge, and remained for some time afterwards, until the Reformation swept all such things away.

The manor-house opposite is now to let, and long has

HAUNTED ?

been. They say it is haunted—but “they”? Who then are they? No very reliable folk, be sure: only those irresponsible gossips who scent mysteries behind every board announcing “This Desirable Mansion to Let.” The more desirable the mansion, the more inexplicable that it should not be desired of some one and become let. As the months go by and lengthen into years and the house-agents’ boards begin themselves to show some evidences of antiquity, the mystery



CLOPTON BRIDGE, AND THE “SWAN’S NEST.”

deepens and the ghost is born. I think this especial ghost was born in the bar-parlour of the “Swan’s Nest.” But it is difficult to get any exact information about this spirit. It would be: it invariably is. Whether the midnight spook be some mournful White Lady who looks from the dust-grimed windows of yonder gazebo upon the road, or some horrific spectre who like the ghost of Hamlet’s father “could a tale unfold, whose lightest word Would harrow up thy soul” and make

“Each particular hair to stand on end,
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine,”

I cannot say. But the local gossip will not lessen as time goes on and the place remains unlet. There could

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

not, for one thing, be a much better setting for ghostly manifestations. It is true that the road is one much used by traffic, and by motorists in especial, whose dust and horrid odours might well disgust any but the hardiest of wraiths; but here is the old garden-pavilion or gazebo on the wall at the fork of roads, with its quaint roof and the windows from which the people of the manor would look out upon the traffic when it was not so dusty and did not stink so much, and here are still the trunks of the magnificent elms that until recently cast a grateful shade upon the road and made the bridge-end so beautiful a scene. But the elms have been lopped and show cruelly amputated limbs, and no one looks any more from the gazebo: it is an eloquent picture of the Past.

Beyond this spot we leave the Shipston road and turn to the right, coming in two miles to Clifford Chambers, which is not the block of offices or residential flats its name would seem to the Londoner to imply, but a picturesque village, taking the first part of its name from an olden ford on the Stour, and the second part from the manor having formerly been the property of the house-stewards, or "Chamberers," of the great Abbey of Gloucester.

The village street of Clifford Chambers stands at an angle from the road, and so keeps its ancient character the better, for the way through it down to the Stour is only a rustic track. Clifford Chambers is therefore entirely unspoiled. Here is the church, grouping beautifully with the ancient parsonage, now a farmhouse again, as it was during the time of the plague at Stratford, in the year when William Shakespeare was born, and when a mysterious John Shakespeare was living here. "Mysterious" because nothing more is known of him, and because the question arises in some minds, "Was the John Shakespeare then living at



CLIFFORD CHAMBERS.

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

Clifford Chambers identical with the John Shakespeare of Stratford-on-Avon, father of William? Was William Shakespeare, in fact, born here, instead of at 'the Birthplace' in Henley Street, or did John Shakespeare remove his wife and infant son hither when the plague broke out in the summer of 1564? Any question of this being the birthplace would seem to be at once disposed of by the undoubted baptism of William Shakespeare at the parish church of Stratford-on-Avon; but the summer retreat of the Shakespeares to this place may yet be a field for interesting speculation.

There is not a more charming old black-and-white house in the neighbourhood than this, with its long range of perpendicular timbers, roughly-split in the old English fashion, which might well show some "restorers" how to do it; and the odd outside stairway at the gable-end, roofed over with its little penthouse roof. It comes well enough in black and white, but forms a feast of mellow colour, in the rich but subdued tints that the lichens and the stains of time and weather have given.

Facing up the rustic street, more like a village green than street, is another and a statelier house: the manor-house, enclosed within its garden-walls. It is of stone, in the early years of the eighteenth century, when Queen Anne reigned.

"Anna, whom three realms obey,
Who sometimes counsel takes, and sometimes tay."

The view through the gates, flanked with imposing masonry piers crested with what the country folk call "gentility balls," shows a delightful picture of old-world stateliness. Time within this enclosure seems to have stood still. You can imagine people living here who still take "a dish of tay," who are "vastly obleeged" when you ask them how they do, and "protest they

WINCOT

are mighty well," or have "the vapours," as the case may be, instead of being, as they would be in other surroundings and in the vile phrases of to-day, "awfully fit," or "feeling rotten."

You can imagine, I say, the owners of this fine old manor-house drinking their dish of tay out of fine old "chaney," as they used to call it; - speaking in the fashion that went out of date with the death of the great Duke of Wellington, who was among the last, I believe, to say "oblegged" and to call a chair a "cheer." Now only the most rustie of rusties talk in this manner, and when they say "cowcumber," and "laylock," and speak of "going fust" they are thought vulgar and reproved by their children. But such was the pronunciation used by the best in the land in years gone by.

There are the loveliest gardens in the rear of this old manor-house, with orchards of apples and pears and wall-fruit beyond, and an older wing by a century or so.

The main road goes straight ahead for some miles, with Long Marston rather more than a mile on the right. It is fully described in these pages, in the first of the two chapters on the "Eight Villages." On the left is the old farm-house which is all that is left of the hamlet of Wincot, the place where "Marian Hacket, the fat alewife," mentioned by Christopher Sly in the induction to the *Taming of the Shrew*, had her alehouse, at which that drunken tinker had run up a score. Many of the hamlets round about are "cotts," "cotes," or "cots"; Grimscote, Foxcote, Hidecote, Idlicote, Darlingscott, and others. Wincot as a hamlet of Quinton finds mention in the registers of that church, and in them, November 21st, 1591, is still to be found the entry recording the baptism of Sara Hacket, daughter of Robert Hacket. The fat Marian, therefore, who allowed

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

drunken undesirables to run up scores, was probably a real person.

As we make for Quinton the tree-crowned height of Meon Hill, an outpost of the Cotswolds, forms a striking landmark in this vale. It is, according to the Ordnance Survey, 637 feet high, and its position, gives it an appearance of even greater eminence. At its foothills lies the village of Quinton, in a district very little disturbed by strangers, and . . . summer days one of quiet delights. Coming over to Quinton one afternoon, from a day of hospitable entertainment at King's Lodge, Long Marston, I cycled along the quiet s...lit road, past the old toll-house with its little strip of wayside garden, and silently came upon a black cat, appreciatively and with much evident enjoyment smelling the wall-flowers growing there. One never before credited cats with a liking for sweet scents.

Only one event during the year disturbs the serenity of Quinton. At other times it drownses, like all its fellow villages of the vale; but this one occasion is like that in Tennyson's *May Queen*, the "maddest, merriest day." It is the day when Quinton Club holds high revel. I do not know what is the purpose of Quinton Club, but the occasion of its merry-making is like that of a village fair, and all those travelling proprietors of steam roundabouts, cocoa-nut shies, shooting-galleries and popular entertainments of that kind who attend fairs make a point of visiting this celebration. And indeed I do not know what Quinton would do without them and the many stall-keepers who come in their train.

To say merely that Quinton is not a large place would be to leave some sort of impression that, if not a little town, it was at least a considerable village. It is, as a matter of fact, a very small one, but to it on this day of days resort the people of those neighbouring places

QUINTON CLUB DAY

unfortunate enough to have neither club nor fair of their own, and you may see them trudging from all directions; driving in on farm-wagons seated with kitchen-chairs for this purpose, or cycling. Towards evening, when most of the countryside has arrived, the strident tones of the steam organ that forms not the least important part of the roundabout, the thuds of the heavy mallets on the "try-your-strength" machines, the shouting of the cocoa-nut shy proprietors, and the general hum and buzz of the fair astonish the stranger afar off. Near at hand, the scent of fried fish is heavy on the air and ginger-bread is hot i' the mouth, and in the centre of the hurly-burly the steam roundabout blares and glares, presided over by a very highly-coloured full-length portrait of no less a person than Lord Roberts, in the full equipment of Field Marshal; the surest test of a soldier's popularity. Lord Kitchener has never yet become the presiding hero over the galloping horses of the steam roundabout: he is perhaps something too grim for these occasions.

I think, beneath the pictured face of Lord Roberts there lurks the countenance of he who was the popular favourite immediately before him; Lord Wolseley, who for twenty years or more was in the shrewd opinion of the showmen, the most attractive personality to preside over the steam-trumpets, the odious "kist o' whistles," the mirrors and the circulating wooden horses. The showmen know best, they are in touch wit' popular sentiment; and be sure that if you scraped off Lord Roberts, you would find the face of Lord Wolseley there. Indeed, the possibility of a real stratum of military heroes is only limited by the age of the machine itself; and if it were only old enough one might penetrate beyond Lord Wolseley to Lord Raglan, and even back to that ancient hero of the inn signs, the Marquis of Granby.

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

The fine church of Quinton looks across the road to the village inn, the "College Arms." The arms are those of Magdalen College, Oxford, owner of the manor.

The church is a Decorated building, with fine spire, and contains some interesting monuments; chief among them an altar-tomb with a very fine brass to Joan Clopton, widow of Sir William Clopton, who died in 1419. An effigy, on another altar-tomb, seen in the church, is said by some to be that of her husband; others declare it to be that of one Thomas le Roos. She survived her husband several years, dying about 1430, in the habit of a religious recluse, or "vowess." She lived probably in a cell or anchoress's hold built on to the church and commanding a view of the altar, and must have had a singularly poor time of it in all those eleven years. No trace remains of her uncomfortable and singularly dull habitation. This misguided lady was by birth a Besford of Besford in Worcestershire, and her coat of arms, displayed separately and also impaled with that of her husband, has six golden pears on a red ground, by way of a painfully far-fetched pun on "Besford." Not even the most desolating punster of our own time could or would torture "Besford" into "Pearsford," but our remote ancestors were capable of the greatest enormities in this way.

Some of the red enamel still remains in the heraldic shields on this fine brass, which, including its canopy, is six feet four inches long. The figure of Joan Clopton, and the brass in general, is in excellent condition, perhaps because the descendants of the family took care of it. One of them, a certain "T. Lingen," whose name appears upon the tomb, repaired it in 1739. A Latin verse occupies the margin of the brass, with little figures of pears repeated at intervals. The verse has been translated as follows--

LOWER CLOPTON

"Vowed to a holy life when ceased her knightly husband's breath,
Joan Clopton here, Anne's grandchild dear, implores Thy grace in
death :

O! Christ, for Thee, O! Jesu blest, how largely hath she shed
Her bounteous gifts on poor and sick—how hath she garnished
Thy stately shrines with splendour meet—how hath she sent before
Her earthly wealth to Thee above, to swell her heavenly store,
For such blest fruits of faith, O grant, in Thine own house her home :
Soft lies an earthly tomb on those to whom these heavenly blessings
come."

A scroll above her head is inscribed with the words—

"Complacet tibi due eripias me
Due ad adiuvand' me respice"

an appeal that may be rendered, "Be good and loving
to me, O Lord."

A striking instance of the affection inspired by Queen Elizabeth is to be noticed in the Royal arms of her period over the chancel arch, bearing, in addition to "that glorious 'Semper Eadem'" alluded to by Macaulay in his ballad on the Armada, the inscription "God love our noble Queen."

Resuming the way to Chipping Campden, the road passes the spot marked on the maps "Lower Clopton." This, or the other tiny hamlet away on the left, called "Upper Clopton," was the home of that first Shakespeare recorded in history, who was hanged in 1248 for robbery. Through Mickleton, a more considerable village than its neighbours, and deriving its original name of "Myccelantune," the "larger town," from that fact, up climbs the highway to Campden.

It is in some ways difficult to imagine Campden the busy and prosperous place it once unquestionably was; but the quiet old streets, lined with houses almost every one of good architectural character; and the old market-house, and the fine church give full assurance of the commercial activity and the wealth that have departed.

CHAPTER XVII

Chipping Campden.

CAMPDEN's position as a market town dates back to Saxon times, when the verb "ceapan," to buy, gave the prefix "Chipping" to it. The town rose to greater prosperity when the ancient wool-growing wealth of the Cotswolds was doubled by the manufacture in these same districts of the cloth from those wealth-bringing fleeces; and great fortunes were amassed by both wool-merchants and clothiers. The rise of England from an agricultural and a wool-growing country, such as Australia now is, to a manufacturing community directly concerned such towns as Stroud, Northleach, Burford and Chipping Campden, which, with the introduction of weaving, earned two profits instead of one. There are perhaps a dozen little Cotswold towns whose great churches were rebuilt in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, in a magnificent style by the wealthy merchants of the time, whose monumental brasses still in many cases remain, representing them standing upon sheep, or woolsacks, or with the tailor's shears between their legs; the origins of their wealth. When the cloth manufacture largely migrated to the Midlands and the north, such towns as Campden, Burford, and Northleach began to decay, and now that Australia is the chief source of the wool supply it is difficult to see how they are ever to recover. They are not on the great routes of traffic, and railways do not come near them.

Campden is situated on a kind of shelf or narrow



OLD HOUSES, CHIPPING CAMPDEN.



THE MARKET HOUSE, CHIPPING CAMPDEN.

Ex. no. p. 174

CHIPPING CAMPDEN

plateau upon the Cotswolds. You come steeply up to it, and, leaving it, rise as steeply as before. Like most of its neighbours on Cotswold, it is a stone-built town, grown grey with age and weathering. When some new mason-work is undertaken—which is not often—the stone is seen to be of a pale biscuit colour; but it soon loses that new tint and rapidly acquires the rather sad hue of the older work.

The traveller fresh from Stratford, where brick, and timber-framed and plastered houses abound, feels astonishment in the sudden transition to a place like Campden, in which I believe there is not a single example of timber-framing.

The old town of Campden is extraordinarily full of architectural interest; with domestic work ranging from the mid-fourteenth century house of the Grevels to the beginning of the eighteenth century, when the town began to decline and building ceased. No modern suburbs are found on the outskirts of Campden. I do not know how the town manages to exist. There is a railway station, but it is a mile away and it is only incidental and placed on the line to Evesham and Worcester. No great genius was ever born at Campden, or if he was, he missed fire and perished unknown. Therefore it is not a place of pilgrimage, and only parties of architectural students, measuring up or sketching some of the charming bits with which it abounds; or artists, or contemplative ruminative folk who want to escape from the eternal hustle of this age and its devilish gospel of "get on or get out" ever go there. "Past" is traced over its every building. "There was a time" might be inscribed over the open-sided and quaintly-colonnaded market-house; and "Yesterday" should be the town motto. There are little courts off the main street where the leisured explorer in Campden will

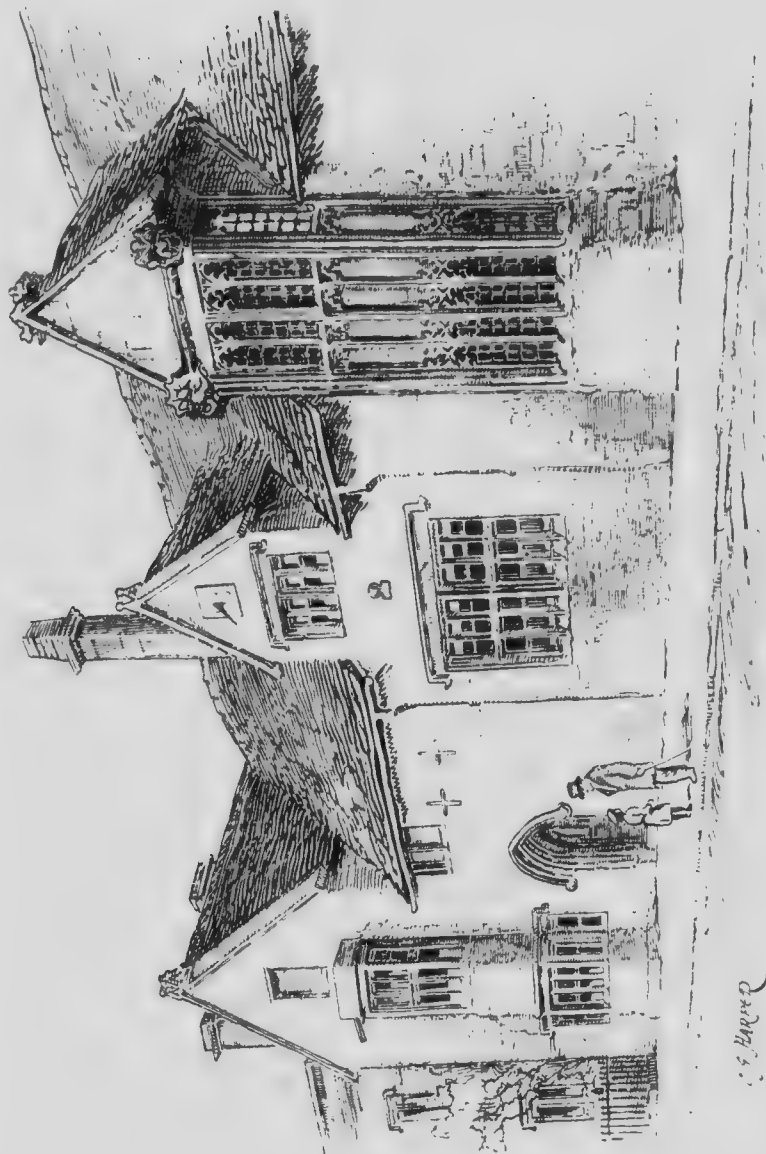
SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

find remains of the old wool warehouses, with here and there a traceried Gothic window. Many old sundials still exist on the walls; in particular a charming example near the market-house with the initials W. S. T. and date 1690; and dated house-tablets show with what pride the old inhabitants looked upon their homes.

But the pride of all the ancient houses of Campden is that house where William Grevel lived in the fourteenth century. It is not a very large house, one thinks, for so wealthy a man as he was, described as he is on the brass in the church as "the flower of the wool-merchants of all England," but it presents a charming frontage to the street and has an oriel window of peculiar beauty, presided over by two huge and hideous gargoyles, the one representing a winged, bat-like monster with gaping mouth and a ferocious expression; the other a kind of demon dog with glaring eyes of intense malignity—the late Mr. William Grevel's familiar spirits, perhaps.

Every one well-read in the history of his country knows that the ranks of its aristocracy and its peerage have constantly been reinforced from the trading classes. It is a matter of money. When a man has great possessions he finds the House of Lords waiting to receive him. It has been so for centuries, and not only so, but the ennobled have in their own later generations given younger sons to trade. The different processes are still seen working; and why not? Wealth will secure consideration, and younger sons who cannot always marry money must in their turn go into trade and make it.

The old wool-merchants and clothiers often rose to the peerage on their own account, or married their sons and daughters into its ranks. William Grevel, who was a descendant of other mercantile Grevels, never became more than a wealthy trader. As such he died



GREVEL'S HOUSE.

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

in 1401, and it was not until just over two centuries had passed that his descendant, Fulke Greville, entered the lists of the coroneted as Baron Brooke; the eighth Baron Brooke not becoming Earl of Warwick until 1759. The Grevels—or "Grevilles," as they afterwards spelt their name—therefore only belatedly won to that haven where they would be; but most others were more fortunate. Baptist Hicks, for example, is an extraordinary instance of swift accumulation of wealth. He, however, made it in London, as a mercer and perhaps a good deal more as a moneylender. He lent money to James the First among others, and became so warm a man that he returned in 1609 to his native Gloucestershire and purchased the manor of Campden, building a magnificent country seat next the church. The cost of this was £29,000: over £200,000 according to present value. He had so much money and so fine a house that he, being already a Knight, was in 1628 created a Viscount. He died the following year, not like Tennyson's Countess of Burleigh, because of the weight of an honour to which he had not been born, but by reason of age and possibly chagrin that he had not been created an Earl.

He was a benefactor to Campden, and built the charming group of almshouses that stand on the left hand on the way to the church.

Past these almshouses, the way goes directly to the church, a noble building of date somewhere about 1530. It owes its present stately proportions and Perpendicular style largely to the benefactions of Grevel and others. The tower is remarkable for a buttress which is in some ways a kind of highly-developed mullion running through the centre of the window of the lower stage. It is perhaps rather more curious than beautiful, and as it cannot be of any constructional value and adds little

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INTERIOR OF THE MARKET HOUSE, CHIPPING CAMPDEN.

THE SHIRT-STEALERS

if anything to the stability of the tower, we can only regard it as one of those freaks of the last phase of Gothic architecture which tell us, if we have but the wit to understand, that, Reformation or no Reformation; with Henry the Eighth or without, the Gothic spirit was dying.

The curious ogee-shaped roof of a building seen in the foreground of the accompanying view of the church is that of a garden-pavilion, or gazebo, of Campden House, the lordly mansion built in 1613 by Sir Baptist Hicks, first Viscount Campden. I have seen curious old illustrations of this fine house, by which it would seem to have been a place of extraordinary grandeur. It is said to have been the largest house ever built in England, and stood upon eight acres of ground. This truly extensive mansion existed no longer than thirty-two years, for it was burnt by order of Prince Rupert in 1645. During that time of civil war Campden House had been a notable rallying-place for the Royalists, who under a rough soldier, Sir Henry Bard, had made themselves a pestilent nuisance, not only to their natural enemies, but even to sympathisers. If they needed anything in the way of food, forage, or apparel, they took it where it was to be found, whether from Roundhead or Royalist. They raped the very clothes off the country people's backs. "A man," says one of these lamenting rustics, "need keep a tight hold of his very breeches, or 'tis odds but what these Sabines will have them, and if he is let keep his shirt, it is thought a matter of grace." So it was not altogether regretfully that they saw Bard and his brigands depart while there remained one of those indispensable articles, or a hat, or pair of shoes in the neighbourhood. When the garrison left, they fired the mansion. It was never rebuilt, and to this day its ruins stand to keep the tale in mind.

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

That the church was rebuilt in the very last years of the Late Perpendicular style is more and more evident as you approach and examine it. William Grevel in 1401 left a hundred marks towards the work, and you will be told locally that the present building is the result of that gift. But not very much could have been done with such a sum, and in any event, the fabric is distinctly and unmistakably over a hundred years later in date. The ogee pinnacles and mouldings, and especially the flattened arches of the nave-arcade tell their architectural tale in a way that cannot be gainsaid.

On the floor of the chancel is the fine brass to William Grevel, 1401, and Marion, his wife, 1380. It is, with its canopied work, eight feet nine inches high; the figure of Grevel himself being five feet four inches. We see him habited in the merchant's dress of his period, and with the forked beard that was then the usual wear of the elderly among his class, as Chaucer says, in his *Canterbury Tales*: "A marchant was there with a forked beard."

Other brasses are to William Welley, merchant, 1450, and wife Alice; John Lethenard, merchant, 1467, and his wife Joan; and William Gybbys, 1484, with his three wives, Alice, Margaret and Marion, and seven sons and six daughters.

The stately monument of Baptist Hicks, first Viscount Campden, and his wife occupies the south chancel chapel. It is one of the works of Nicholas Stone and his sons, whose extraordinarily fine craftsmanship as sculptors and designers of monuments in the seventeenth century redeemed to a great extent the rather vulgar ostentation which marked in general the neo-classic style of the age. The monument takes up nearly all the floor space and rises to a great height. Beneath a canopy formed by it rest the recumbent marble effigies of that ennobled wool-merchant and sometime Lord Mayor of London,

VISCOUNT CAMPDEN

and his wife, habited in the robes of their rank, and with coronets on their heads. They are impressive in a very high degree. A long Latin inscription narrates his good deeds and expatiates upon the good fortune of Campden which benefited by them.

It is not easy to excuse the deplorable taste which produced the large monument against the wall to Edward Noel, 2nd Viscount Campden, who died 1642, and his widow, Juliana, 1680. We would like to believe that the idea of it was none of Nicholas Stone's, but was dictated by the mortuary grief of that thirty-eight years' long widow, who no doubt found great satisfaction and consolation in coming every now and then to open its doors and look at the gruesome white marble figures, larger than life, of herself and her husband, representing them standing hand in hand, in their shrouds. They remind one very vividly of the lines in *Ruddigore* —

“And then the ghost and his lady toast
To their churchyard beds take flight,
With a kiss perhaps on her lantern chaps
And a grisly, grim ‘Good-night!’”

The visitor to Campden church is told that the black marble doors disclosing these figures and now fixed permanently open, against the wall, were generally closed during the lifetime of the widow, and were opened at her decease. The long epitaphs tell us in detail about her, her husband, and her family. On the left-hand is that to the husband—

“This monument is erected to preserve the memory and pourtrait of the Right Honourable Sr. Edward Noel, Viscount Campden, Baron Noel of Ridlington and Hicks of Ilmington. He was Knight Banneret in the wars of Ireland, being young, and then created Baronet anno 1611. He was afterwards made Baron of Ridlington. The other titles came unto him by right of Dame Juliana,

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

his wife, who stands collaterall to him in this monument, a lady of extraordinary great endowments, both of vertue and fortune. This goodly lord died at Oxford at ye beginning of the late fatall civil warrs, whither he went to serve and assist his sovverain Prince Charles the First, and so was exalted to the Kingdom of Glory, 8 Martii 1642."

The right hand door is inscribed with the lady's own description, and of her children's fortunes —

"The Lady Juliana, eldest daughter and co-heire (of that mirror of his time) Sr. Baptist Hicks, Viscount Campden. She was married to that noble Lord who is here engraven by her, by whom she had Baptist, Lord Viscount Campden, now living (who is blessed with a numerous and gallant issue). Henry, her second son, died a prisoner for his loyalty to his Prince. Her eldest daughter, Elizabeth, was married to John Viscount Chaworth: Mary, her second daughter, to the very noble Knight, Sr Erasmus de la Fontaine. Penelope, her youngest daughter, died a mayd.

"This excellent lady, for the pious and unparallel'd affections she retained to the memory of her deceased lord, caused this stately monument to be erected in her lifetime, in September Anno Dom. 1664."

A very charming mural monument to the Lady Penelope shows a delicately-sculptured bust. She is seen wearing a dress with deep Vandyck lace collar. As with the other monuments, it is clearly from the hands of the Stone family. The Lady Penelope, who died young in 1633, is traditionally said to have died from the effects of pricking her finger when working in coloured silks. The position of the hand is said to be in allusion to the accident. A companion figure is that to the Lady Anne Noel, wife of the Lady Penelope's brother, Baptist. She died 1636.

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CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY

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THE 'CAMPDEN WONDER'

The "Campden Wonder," at which people in 1662 marvelled, is still an unsolved mystery, and ever likely to remain so. The story of it began in 1660, on August 16th, when William Harrison, a staid elderly man of about sixty years, who had been trusted for many years as the steward of the widowed Juliana, Viscountess Campden, went to Charingworth, three miles away, to collect some rents. When night had come and he had not returned, his wife sent a servant, John Perry, in search. By morning, when he too had not come back, Mrs. Harrison grew more alarmed and sent her son, Edward, who met Perry returning, without having seen anything of his master. Young Harrison persuaded the man to go to Ebrington with him and to raise further inquiries. There they heard that William Harrison had called the evening before and rested, and that he had then left. He had then about £23 on him.

On their way back to Campden, young Harrison and Perry met a woman who handed them a bloodstained comb and band which that morning she had found in the furze on the road between Ebrington and Charingworth. They were those of the missing man, but of him no trace could be found. He did not take long to come to the conclusion that Perry must have had a hand in his master's disappearance, and he was arrested on suspicion of murder. He had told so many contradictory tales that he was rightly suspected, and after a week's imprisonment he had yet another story. He now "confessed" that his mother, Joan Perry, and his brother Richard had long urged him to rob his master, and that at last they had on this occasion waylaid and robbed him, afterwards strangling him and throwing the body into the great mill-sink of the neighbouring Wallington's Mill. The comb and band had been put on the road by himself.

John Perry's mother and brother were accordingly

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

arrested and the three were tried at Gloucester and convicted, notwithstanding the fact that no body had been found, and in spite of the piteous protestations of innocence by Joan Perry and Richard, and in face of the avowal by John that he must have been mad when he "confessed." He now declared he knew nothing of Harrison's death; but in spite of all these doubts, the three were executed, on Broadway Hill. Joan was hanged first, and Robert next. John calmly saw them die and listened to their last appeals to him to confess and to exonerate them. He was hanged last, protesting that he had never known anything of his master's death, or even if he were dead. But, he added, they might hereafter possibly hear.

The countryside congratulated itself upon being rid of three undesirables. The old woman had always been reputed a witch. And when the affair was becoming a stale and exhausted topic, one autumn evening at dusk, two years later, Mr. William Harrison, for whose murder three persons had been convicted and hanged, returned and walked into his own house.

He gave forth an ingenious but preposterous story to account for his two years' absence. As he was returning home, he said, on the evening of his disappearance, he was intercepted by three horsemen who attacked, wounded and robbed him, and carrying him to a neighbouring cottage on the heath, nursed him there until it was possible to carry him across country to Dover, where they put him aboard a vessel and sold him to the captain, who had several others in like case with himself on his ship. They voyaged from Deal and after about six weeks' sail they were seized by Turkish pirates and he and the others were put aboard the Turkish ship and sold as slaves in Turkey. His master lived near Smyrna. After serving him as a slave for nearly two years, the



BRASS TO WILLIAM GREVEL AND WIFE, CHIPPING CAMPDEN.

[To see p. 184

THE 'CAMPDEN WONDER'

elderly Turk died and the slave escaped to the coast, where he persuaded some Hamburg sailors to take him as a stowaway to Lisbon. There he met an Englishman who took compassion upon him and found him a passage to England. Landing at Dover, he made his way directly home.

This cock-and-bull story was all that the country ever had in the way of satisfaction. Harrison went about his steward's business as before, trusted and respected, and died ten years later. In after years some suspicion seems to have fallen upon the son, but for what reason does not appear. That industrious Oxford diarist, Anthony Wood, who took a keen interest in the affair, as did all the country, says, "After Harrison's return, John was taken down [from his gibbet] and Harrison's wife soon after (being a snotty covetous presbyterian) hung herself in her own house. Why, the reader is to judge."

In leaving Campden and its memories, I must not let it be supposed that in speaking of the town as decayed and belonging to the past I either intend to slight it or forget the Guild of Handicraft established here in 1892. Removed from London in that year, it has sought to bring back in these more and more commercial and factory times the craftsman's old traditions of artistic and individual work, no matter in what trade. In printing, bookbinding, enamel-work, jewellery and cabinet-making it has sought by precept and example to further the teachings of Ruskin and Morris, and has created a new feeling here and elsewhere which has effects in places little suspected.

CHAPTER XVIII

A Deserted Railway—Villages of the Stour Valley—Ettington and Squire Shirley—Shipston-on-Stour—Brailes—Compton Wynyates.

THERE is not an uninteresting road among the eight that lead out of Stratford, and all are beautiful. But none has more beauty than that which runs southward to Shipston-on-Stour. This way, or by the route leading through Ettington and Sunrising Hill, you go to Compton Wynyates, that wonderfully picturesque old mansion of the Comptons, Marquises of Northampton, which has remained unaltered for centuries in its remoteness, and is still not easily accessible. The Shipston road then, for choice, to Compton Wynyates. It follows, more or less closely the valley of the Stour, and here and there touches the river; while companionably, all the way run the grass-grown cuttings and embankments of that long-abandoned Stratford and Shipston Tramway whose red brick bridge is a feature of the Avon at Stratford town.

The deserted earthworks and ivy-grown bridges of this forgotten undertaking, now this side of the road and then the other, excite the curiosity of the stranger, but he will rarely find anyone to tell him the meaning of them, and at the best only vaguely. Their story is one of unfulfilled hopes and money flung ruinously away; for they are the only traces of the Central Junction Railway projected in 1820, to run through to Oxford and London. It was a horsed tramway, and was opened through Shipston to Moreton-in-the-Marsh in 1826. A re-

THE 'OLD WORSE AND WORSE'

munerative traffic in general agricultural produce and goods was expected, but the enterprise seems to have been weighted from the beginning with the heavy expenses of construction. Estimated by Telford at £35,000 for the Stratford-on-Avon to Moreton section, they soon reached £50,000. But the doom of the project was sounded by the introduction of the locomotive engine, almost simultaneously with the opening. In 1845 it was leased to the Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton Railway, a scandalously inefficient line whose initials, "O. W. W." suggested to saturnine wags the appropriate name of "Old Worse and Worse." This ill-managed affair was eventually absorbed into the Great Western Railway, which now owns these relics.

Little villages are thickly set along the course of the Stour, to the right of the road; ancient settlements, each but a slightly larger or smaller collection of farmhouses, barns and thatched cottages, with a church in their midst. Here the Saxon farmers came and early cultivated the rich meadow-lands, leaving the poorer uplands long unenclosed and untilled; and to every little community came the clergy and set up a church and tithed those farmers who earned their livelihood by the sweat of their brows. Such a village is Atherstone-upon-Stour, where a majestic red brick farmhouse, dating from the seventeenth century, neighbours a debased little church. There is little of interest in that church, and the loathly epitaph to William Thomas, a son of the rector, who died in 1710, aged nine, of small-pox, decently veils in the obscurity of eighteenth century pedagogic Latin the full particulars given of his disease.

A rather larger village is Preston-upon-Stour, reached from the highway after passing the lovely elm avenues

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

of Alscot Park. Thatched cottages looking upon an upland green, with village church presiding over it, are the note of Preston. Tall stone gate-piers of the eighteenth century, with fine wrought-iron gates, give entrance to the churchyard. The interior of the church is, however, a very shocking example of the eighteenth-century way with Gothic buildings.

Smaller than any of these places by the lovely little Stour is Whitechurch, just before the larger village of Alderminster. It lies off to the right, not often troubled by the stranger. The place-name is thought to derive from a supposed former dedication of the church to St. Candida, or Wita. "Alderminster" means probably "the alderman's town," the property in Saxon times of some wealthy landowner, and has no ecclesiastical associations or monastic history that would account for the "minster" in the place-name.

The road grows extremely beautiful at the crossing of the Stour by Ettington Park and the approach to Newbold. Here, where a by-road to Grimscote goes off on the right, an ornate pillar standing on the grass serves the purpose of a milestone and bears the sculptured arms—the gold and black pales (heraldically paly of six, or and sable)—of a former owner of Ettington Park, generally spoken of in the neighbourhood as "wold Squire Shirley, what lived yur tharty yur agoo." It was in 1871 that he erected this elaborate stone which I think must be the only poetical milestone in England. It is not great poetry, and there is not much of it; but it shows the immense possibilities of wayside entertainment, if all its fellows were made to burst into song—

"6 miles
To Shakespeare's Town, whose name
Is known throughout the earth;
To Shipston 4, whose lesser fame
Boasts no such poet's birth."

A POET-SQUIRE

You will see here that my own notion, earlier in these chaste pages, of re-naming the town "Shakespeare-on-Avon" germinated, however unconsciously, in "wold Squire Shirley's" brain, over forty years since.

But this is not all. Two Latin and English verses are added to the tale of it —

"Crux mea lux,
After darkness light.
From light hope flows,
And peace in death,
In Christ is sure repose.
Spes 1871.
Post obitum Salus.
In obitu Pax
In hunc Spes
Post tenebras lux."

The shields of arms include the nine roundels of the see of Worcester, and a further shield of the Shirley arms, with a canton ermine.

This poetical squire was Mr. Evelyn Philip Shirley, kinsman of Earl Ferrers. He refronted his house at Ettington Park, and indulged himself fully in that elaborate mansion in the verse he loved so well and posed so ill. In the hall still remains the shield arms he set up there, displaying these same alternate black and gold stripes which come down from the times of Sewallis, and beneath it another of his compositions—

"These be the pales of black and gold
The which Sewallis bore of old;
And this the coat which his true heirs
The ancient house of Shirley bears."

Ettington Park is now without a tenant and is, I believe, to be sold. Thus passes the pride of this branch of the Shirleys.

It is a lovely park and a stately house, with the ivied ruins of the ancient church adjoining, including the tombs and effigies of older Shirleys and others who would

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make excellent ancestors for any enterprising purchaser. "I don't know whose ancestors they were," says the Major-General in the *Pirates of Penzance*, of the monuments in the ruined chapel on the estate he has bought, "but I know whose they are."

The Squire, besides his activities in the way of bad rhymes, stumbling metres, and obvious moral sentiments, was an antiquary, and keen to alter the spelling of the place-name "Eatington" to "Ettington," on the coming of the railway in 1873. He showed that it is "Etendone" in Domesday Book, and that Dugdale, the historian of Warwickshire, was the first to spell it Eatington in 1656. But Dugdale, who knew the name derived from the watery situation of the place, was right, and Domesday wrong, as it very often is in these matters, the Norman-French compilers of it not being at all well-equipped for rendering the, to them, alien names correctly.

Passing pretty scenes at Newbold-on-Stour, the road bears away from the river and touches it again at the equally pretty village of Tredington. The spire of Honington is then seen on the left, and Shipston-on-Stour is entered. There is a railway station at Shipston, the terminus of a little branch line from Moreton-in-the-Marsh. When the railway reached so far it exhausted all its energies and could do no more. It might be supposed, from the efforts to reach Shipston by rail, that it was an important place, whose traffic was well worth securing—perhaps even, from its name, a port; but it is long since this old market-town was a place of any commercial value, and no ships ever sailed the little Stour. They were sheep, not ships, that gave Shipston its name, and it first appears in history, nine hundred and fifty years ago, as "Scepewasce"; that is to say, the place where the sheep were washed in those Saxon

COMPTON WYNYATES

times. It was written "Seepwaesetun" in 1006, and is "Seepwestun" in Domesday; *i. e.* the Sheepwash Town.

To Brailes, over two miles from Shipston, the road rises, commanding views down upon the left over "the Feldon," as the district between this and Stratford-on-Avon is known; that clearing in the ancient Forest of Arden which is by no means so bare of timber as might be supposed, and itself indeed looks from this height very like a forest. At Brailes is the parish church, proudly styled the "Cathedral of the Feldon." It is large, its tower is lofty, rising to a hundred and twenty feet, and it stands in a prominent position. Its Perpendicular architecture is good, too, but there is nothing, internally, of a cathedral about it.

At the "George" inn, Brailes, the traveller to Compton Wynyates will do well to refresh himself before he proceeds further, for not only has he come far, but when he has threaded the steep and winding lanes beyond which that romantic manor-house of the Comptons lies in its deep, cup-like hollow, he will need something wherewith to fortify his energies, especially as it is extremely likely he will lose himself on the way, and as there is no likelihood of his being able to refresh himself when there. Romance, lovely scenery, and picturesque architectural grouping are not well seen when fasting.

"Wynyates" is a puzzling word, which may mean "Vineyards" or "Windgates": the first for choice. The place, let it be impressed upon the stranger, is a house, not a village; although, looking sheerly down upon the hollow where its crowded gables and many clustered chimneys are seen, with its adjoining church, a village it might appear to be. There was once, indeed, such a place, but it disappeared so long ago that no one can tell us anything about it, and its church, which stood upon

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the site of the present building, was battered to pieces and "totally reduced to rubbish," as Dugdale tells us, during the siege of the mansion in 1644.

Thus the Comptons, Marquises of Northampton, have the place all to themselves. And it is very likely that the explorer also will have Compton Wynyates to himself, for this is but one of the residences of that noble family, whose chief seat is at Castle Ashby, away in Northamptonshire, and it is occupied for only a short interval in every year. By an admirable generosity and courtesy the stranger may generally be assured of permission to see the interior of the mansion, a privilege very well worth exercising.

Sir William Compton, the builder of Compton Wynyates, was the descendant of a long line of obscure squires who had been settled here for centuries. He owed his advancement in life to being brought up with Henry the Eighth, who cherished an affection for him and gave his friend the Castle of Fulbrook, which was situated between Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick. Sir William Compton did a singular thing with the gift. He pulled it down and transported the materials by pack-horse or mule-train the dozen miles or so across country to this secluded hollow, and with them built the charming house we now see. Fulbrook Castle, it would thus appear, was less of a castle than a slightly embattled manor-house, built of red brick, with tall moulded chimney stacks, in the reign of Henry the Sixth. It had been in existence only some eighty years. Its chimneys, according to tradition, were taken whole, the mortar being so strong that the bricks could not be separated. Thus the singularity of a brick house in a stone district is explained.

It is red brick such as that of Hampton Court: a lovely mellow red, further toned by more than four

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COMPTON WANNYATES

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COMPTON WYNYATES

hundred and fifty years. The remains of a moat, and some beautiful gardens, form an exquisite setting. Little has ever been done to alter the mansion. It is built around a quadrangle, and is entered by the original brick porch with the Royal arms of the Tudor period above. Within is the Great Hall, panelled in oak, with timbered roof and minstrel-gallery. The adjoining dining-room, oak-panelled and with richly-decorated plaster ceiling, displaying the heraldic devices of the Comptons, is next the domestic chapel. On the floor above are the withdrawing-rooms communicating with the chapel-gallery. Here is "Henry the Eighth's Bedchamber," afterwards used by Queen Elizabeth when she visited Henry Compton, grandson of Sir William, in 1572, shortly after creating him Baron Compton. His son William is the hero of that Compton romance which brought the family great wealth. He fell in love with the daughter and heiress of the enormously rich Sir John Spencer, alderman of London, but the father did not approve of it and refused to allow his daughter to hold any converse with her lover, who then had recourse to an ingenious stratagem. He enlisted the Spencer's family baker upon his side, bribing him to be allowed to carry the domestic bread to the house, and duly disguised appeared one morning with his load. He was so early that the alderman gave him sixpence and a homily on the virtues of diligence and punctuality. But when the loaves had been delivered, the lady herself took her place in the basket and was carried away in it and promptly married. Her father, cheated of the better match he had looked for, disinherited her, and the Spencer wealth would have gone other ways but for Queen Elizabeth, who when the first child of these enterprising lovers was born asked Sir John Spencer to be sponsor with her at the baptism of a child she was

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interested in, and to adopt it. He unsuspectingly agreed and thus became godfather and guardian of his grandson, who inherited the riches so nearly lost. The resourceful lover and husband, father of this fortunate boy, Spencer Compton, was created Earl of Northampton by James the First. Spencer, the second Earl, fought for King Charles at Edge Hill, October 23rd, 1642, and was slain at Hopton Heath the following March. In June 1644, the Royalist garrison of Compton Wynyates was besieged, and the house was captured in two days, and held throughout the war by the Roundheads, in spite of the bold moonlight attack in December, when the two brothers, Sir Charles and Sir William Compton, at the head of a daring party from Banbury, surprised the outposts, rushed the drawbridge which then crossed the moat, and fought a long hand to hand fight in the stables, before they were driven back.

The long wooden gallery under the roof on one side of the house is known as "the Barracks." Here the garrison lay during those times. A panelled room in the tower is known as the "Council Chamber." Above it is the "Priest's Room," apparently at some time used as a secret chapel, for on the wooden window-shelf may be seen the five rudely-cut crosses for an altar.

The church destroyed in the troubles of the civil war was rebuilt in 1663 by the third Earl of Northampton, and contains the battered monuments of Sir William Compton, builder of the mansion, and his wife; and of Henry, first Baron Compton; retrieved from the moat, into which, after being broken up, they had been thrown.

CHAPTER XIX

Luddington—Welford—Weston-on-Avon—Cleeve Priors—Salford Priors.

THE way from Stratford to Evesham is a main road, the road through Bidford, that already described in the chapters on the "Eight Villages," and hardly to be mentioned again except that by making some variations here and there, two or three villages not otherwise to be visited may be included. The first is Luddington, two and a half miles from the town, on a duly sign-posted road to the left, an excellent road, although not marked so on the maps. Luddington, besides being a village of one long row of old thatched cottages close to the Avon, is of some mild interest as being the place of which Thomas Hunt, one of Shakespeare's school-masters, became curate-in-charge, and where, some say, Shakespeare was married. But the old church was burnt down many years ago and rebuilt in 1872, and the register, supposed to have been destroyed at the same time, was long kept in private hands, finally disappearing altogether. The late Mr. C. E. Flower, of Stratford-on-Avon, stated that, in his younger days, "no one dreamed of disputing the assertion that Shakespeare was married at Luddington old church"; and many others declared that they had seen the entry in the book.

The way through Luddington crosses over the railway and rejoins the main road half a mile short of Binton station. Welford lies away to the left.

Welford is a kind of show place in the Stratford

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district. "Ah! if you want to see a pretty place, you should go to Welford." The experienced traveller and amateur of rural beauty hears this with a certain amount of misgiving, for the popular suffrages might mean tea-gardens and all the materials towards making a happy day for those very many people who think nature unadorned to be a dull affair at the best. But Welford is quite as good as it is represented to be. One might almost style it the most picturesque village in the neighbourhood.

There is a good deal of Welford in the aggregate, but it is so scattered that it has the appearance of half a dozen hamlets. It is best reached by turning off the road to Bidford just short of Binton railway station. A few yards bring you to what are called "Binton bridges," across the Avon, here running in overgrown channels, thick with "the vagabond flag," and shaded by willows that recall the lines in *Hamlet*—

"There is a willow grows askant the brook
That shews his hoar leaves in the glassy stream."

You may notice, when the wind ruffles the leaves of the willow, that the description is exact; the underside of a willow-leaf being different from the upper, and of a hoary, grey-white tint.

"Binton bridges" are not, as might perhaps be assumed, bridges side by side, but are continuations, across the two channels of the river. Immediately across them the sign of the "Four Alls" inn attracts notice. It is a picture-sign showing the King, "I rule all"; a bishop, "I pray for all"; a guardsman, "I fight for all"; and a mournful-looking person, seated, wearing a suit of black clothes and a thoughtful expression of countenance: "I pay for all." It is a sign to be matched in other parts of the country, and was

WELFORD

invented long ago by some sardonic person who had pondered deeply upon the functions of the Monarchy, the Church, the Army, and the tax-payer. But he lacked the savage, saturnine humour of the person who thought of the "Five Alls," another sign not unknown in the length and breadth of the land. The Fifth All being the Devil: "I take all!"

The first part of Welford soon appears, on the right. It might be styled the chief part, because here, among the scattered groups of cottages, the church is found. The church itself is only mildly interesting, but the old lych-gate is a quaint survival, as weather-worn and rustic and untouched as Welford itself; its rude timbers scamed and bleached with the weather of over four centuries. Past the church you come down Boat Lane to the river, where the weir can be heard roaring. There are some particularly sketchable cottages in this lane, as will be seen by the illustration over-leaf.

Returning, and proceeding southwards, other ancient thatched cottages are passed, and then we come to the maypole, doubtless regarded as the centre of the village. It is still dressed on May Day every year, and stands here all the year on its mound, a thing for the stranger to wonder at, gaily painted in bands of red, white and blue. It is not, of course, the only existing maypole in England. I myself, *moi que vous parle*, know about a dozen; but they are sufficiently unusual to attract attention.

The rest of Welford straggles along a broad street to the left, and presently ends obscurely in meadows leading to the river. Across field-paths one comes in this direction to the very out-of-the-world little village of Weston-on-Avon. The explorer who finds Weston feels like some member of the Geographical Society who has wandered in strange, outlandish parts and comes

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back to read a paper on the subject; but I dare say it is similarly discovered very frequently. Meanwhile, I have no travellers' tales to tell of the manners and customs of the people, who are, as commonly elsewhere, of two sexes and walk upright on their hind legs, and some are old and some young, and others yet middle-aged. And there is the railway station of Milcote, only



BOAT LANE, WELFORD.

a mile away, situated in a field. No one seems ever to go to it, or come from it; "Milcote" being a species of dream place represented only by two remote houses. I believe the station must have been set down there by some railway manager suffering from strong delusions.

Weston-on-Avon is really a very charming little place, with a small aisleless Late Perpendicular church, remarkable for the continuous range of windows high up in the north wall, giving the interior an unusual brightness and grace. The tower is furnished at its angles with gargoyles of an unusual size and imaginative quality.

SALFORD HALL

Returning to Welford, a by-road leads by the meadows called "Welford Pastures" to Barton, and across the Roman road, the Ryknield Street, to the hamlet of Marcliff, below Bidford, where the Avon becomes broader and navigable and lined with beautifully wooded cliffs, densely covered with foliage to the water's edge. A mile further is the village of Cleeve Priors, where the picturesque old "King's Arms" inn, with its horseman's upping-block in front, dates from 1691. Here, too, is a small seventeenth-century manor-house, with heavily-barred and grated door, breathing old-time distrust and suspicion.

Returning through the village to the waterside, the river may be crossed here, by the long plank footbridge, only one plank wide, at Cleeve Mill and lock; and Abbot's Salford reached, on the Evesham main road, just missing Salford Priors, where, if we wish to see it, there is a fine old church. Salford Priors was anciently the property of the Priory of Kenilworth, and Salford Abbots that of Evesham Abbey. Here, enclosed within a jealous high wall, is the old Hall, generally called "the Nunnery," because of a Roman Catholic sisterhood having been established here in modern times. It is a small Jacobean mansion, very tall in proportion to its size, and curiously huddled together. Quaint curved and re-curved gables of a bygone fashion, deeply set windows, and lofty stone chimney-stacks, give the place a reticent look; the look of a house with a history and secrets of its own. There are so many amateurs of the quaint and historic nowadays that the occupiers of Salford Hall have grown a little tired of showing strangers the genuine old hiding-hole in the garret; behind a quite innocent-looking cupboard. You open the cupboard and see a commonplace row of shelves. No one would suspect a secret there. But when a wooden peg is removed, the shelves,

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together with the back of the cupboard, push back on hinges, admitting to a hiding-hole for priest or cavalier, or any whose necessities led him to store himself uncomfortably away here. Once inside, the fugitive could fix the door with a peg, so that it could not be moved from without.

Harvington, which comes next on our way to Evesham, is a delightful cluster of old timbered houses, with a church whose Norman tower has been given a modern spire. The village is at least half a mile from the river, but it takes its name, originally "Herefordtun," from an ancient paved ford still there, a most charming and interesting scene. The ford is practically a submerged paved road, such as those by which the Romans crossed rivers, and is broad enough for wagons to pass. The roads on either side are, however, only byways, leading to the Littleton villages and the Lenches.

Norton, whose full name is Abbot's Norton, comes next. It was for some years, until the beginning of 1912, the property of the Orleans family, one of the exiled Royal houses of France; but the Duc d'Orléans has now sold his estates and his residence at Wood Norton, close by, to Mr. Justice Swinfen Eady. Norton has yet more, and very fine timbered houses, and in its church a number of the Bigg family, in effigy on altar-tombs emblazoned to wonderment with their heraldic honours and those of their wives. The marble lectern is a relic from Evesham Abbey.

From Norton the road enters Evesham along Greenhill, where the battle was fought in 1265, and where the suburbs now chiefly extend.

CHAPTER XX

Evesham.

THE legendary story of Evesham's origin takes us back to the year 701, when one of the Bishop of Worcester's swineherds, seeking a strayed sow, penetrated the forest that then covered this site, and here found his sow and also a ruined chapel, relic of an ancient and forgotten church. A modern discoverer of ruins would find shattered walls and nothing else, but Eof, the swineherd, beheld a vision of the Virgin and attendant saints singing there. Instead of worshipping, he ran, almost scared out of his life, and only ventured back under the protection of Bishop Egwin himself, who saw the same wonderful sight and heard the singing. There could be but one outcome of this : the founding of a religious house upon the spot ; and there arose the great Benedictine monastery of Eof's-hamme. Even in those times there would seem to have been people who could not digest this story, as the Bishop soon found, and he seems to have been so stricken by the tales told of him that he considered nothing less than a pilgrimage to Rome would avail him much. His preparations for departing were peculiar. He chained his legs together and having locked the chain, threw the key into the river. Arrived at Rome in spite of this amazing difficulty (we are not told how he got there !), a salmon bought for him proved to contain, when cut open, the key to unlock his fetters. The salmon had swallowed it in the Avon and had swum across seas ! This cumulative outrage upon

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common sense the Pope needs to tell us how the bells of Rome rang of these deeds, and how impressed was the Pope. Nothing afterwards ever astonished him: his capacity for wonder was filled to the brim. These unparalleled occurrences seemed to this credulous and doddering old Pope a strong proof of Egwin's honesty that he forthwith conferred upon his monastery not only many valuable privileges, but freed it from the authority of Worcester. And Egwin, third Bishop of Worcester, resigned the greater post for the lesser, and became the Abbot of Evesham. There appears to have been at first doubt as to what the name was to be, for it is once referred to as "Egguineshamme"; but the legendary herdsman Eof easily won the honour, and although Egwin was created a saint after his death, the place never acquired his name and thus we have "Evesham" instead of "Exham," as the place would probably otherwise have been called.

On this foundation of incredible story the future wealth and power of the great Abbey of Evesham was laid. Its Abbots never grew ashamed of the stupid lies, and to the last sealed their deeds and documents with seals bearing representations of Egwin's unlocked fetters and other incidents of his fantastic invention. In spite of fire, invasion and even early confiscation of some of its property, Evesham Abbey grew wealthier and more influential. Its Abbots were of those great mitred Abbots who sat in Parliament, prone to anger and violence on occasion; and not infrequently they were of the type of Abbot Roger, who in the thirteenth century expended the substance of the monastery on riotous living and kept his seventy monks and sixty servants so ill-clothed and fed that they went in rags and even starved. No bite nor sup for them; and when they crawled into the Abbey, the leaky roof poured water

EVESHAM

on them. Some died of starvation. It would take long to tell in full the story of the many years in which this strange Abbot ruled.

But the monastery and its great Abbey church easily survived this miserable time, and fresh architectural glories were added. Even at the last, when the suppression of the great religious houses under Henry the Eighth was impending, more building was in progress. Abbot Lichfield, the last of the long line, then ruled, and was building the Bell Tower, which almost alone remains of the Abbey church. That church, 350 feet in length, and its many chapels and chantries, filled with the tombs of generations of benefactors who had hoped by their gifts to be prayed for "for ever," was destroyed in almost the completest manner. Even Thomas Cromwell, the most zealous of Henry the Eighth's coadjutors, was impressed with the beauty of this great mass of buildings; but all efforts to avert the destruction, and to put them to some collegiate use, failed. Not even the great Abbey of Bury St. Edmunds disappeared quite so completely as this of Evesham. Leland, writing in 1540, six years later, remarked, with astonishment: "Gone, a mere heap of ruins."

The position of the town upon the meadow-lands by the Avon is enshrined in the second half of the place-name, which in this case is not the more common "ham," indicating a "home," or settlement, but "hamme," a waterside meadow. You do not see the justness of this until the river has been crossed by the fine modern bridge, and the town viewed from Bengeworth, on the other side of Avon. Thence those meadows are seen, with the Abbey Bell Tower, and the towers and spires of the churches of St. Lawrence and All Saints, making an unusual grouping, with a certain grandeur in their contrasting dispositions. We may readily admit that

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the famous Lell Tower is the finest architectural work in Evesham, because the admission will make it the easier to criticise its great defect, its comparative dwarfness. Built in 1533 by Abbot Lichfield, it was the last work of the Gothic era at Evesham, and is perhaps one of the most striking examples of the Perpendicular



BELL TOWER, EVESHAM.

period: embodying the features of the style in the highest degree, in the long lateral panellings wholly covering its surface. It is the more noticeable because of its solitary position. But to lavish upon it the unqualified praise that is commonly given is alike uncritical of its own defect of insufficient height, and shows an ignorance or forgetfulness of the grander proportions of the central tower of Gloucester Cathedral, very closely resembling it in style, or of the unmatched

EVESHAM

towers of the Somersetshire churches, many of which are not only loftier, and with far better and varied details, but have also that sense of height which is rather painfully lacking here.

The entrance from the Market Place to what were once the Abbey precincts, where the churches of St. Lawrence and All Saints stand closely neighbouring one another, in one churchyard, is by the so-called Norman Gateway. There is not much left of the Norman work, the upper part being a half-timber building, apparently of the fifteenth century. The view into this corner from the Market Place is very picturesque, but it was better before the adjoining public library was built, a few years ago. Not only were some charmingly old-world houses destroyed to make way for it, but it is itself a building lamentably out of character with its surroundings. The church of St. Lawrence, very late in style and remarkable for the originality of its tower and spire, has some delicate and elaborate work; and in that of All Saints is the richly-panelled and fan-vaulted chantry built by Clement Lichfield, the last Abbot of Evesham, who lies here.

A relic of the Abbey of a more domestic character is seen in the lovely little building on Abbey Green called the Almonry. It was formerly the place where the almoners distributed their doles, and is of all periods from Early English to Perpendicular, its materials ranging from stone to timber, brick and plaster. Many generations have had something to say in the building of it, and the present has at the moment of writing these lines said yet another word, stripping off the plaster with which the front had been covered for some two centuries. The sturdy oak timbering is now uncovered, and is a revelation to many of unsuspected beauty. An ancient stone lantern is inside the building, which

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is now occupied as the "Rudge Estate Office." Perhaps, now that these new and better ways with old buildings are revealing long-forgotten craftsmanship, attention will be turned to the ancient Booth Hall, or market-house, still standing in the Market Place, covered in like manner with plaster.

It would not be well to leave Evesham without referring to the greatest event in its history, the fierce



THE ALMONRY, EVESHAM.

battle fought here August 4th, 1265, at Greenhill, on the road to Worcester. Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, in arms against Henry the Third, and with the King himself a prisoner in his hands, lay at Evesham the night before with his army. De Montfort and his men were at mass early the next morning and then marched out to meet an enemy who outnumbered them and had cut off every avenue of escape. They were fighting for the popular cause, and De Montfort, Frenchman though he might be, was the chosen champion of English liberties. Privilege and the reactionaries had

THE BATTLE OF EVESHAM

their way that day, for Prince Edward and his numerically superior and encircling army cut down De Montfort and his men in swathes. None asked or gave quarter on that fatal day. A large number hewed their way through and fled to the Castle of Kenilworth, but the old Simon and his son Henry were slain. The King himself was almost slain by mistake. The sculptured base of an obelisk on the site of the battle at Abbey Manor, Greenhill, portrays this incident, with the King's words, "I am Henry of Winchester, your King. Do not kill me."

"It is God's grace!" exclaimed the dying De Montfort. The exultant enemy did not scruple to mutilate his body and to send portions of it about the country.

"Such," says Robert of Gloucester,

"was the murder of Evesham, for battle none it was,
And therewith Jesus Christ ill pleased was,
As he showed by tokens grisly and good."

In spite of the Ban of Kenilworth, which forbade the people to regard Simon de Montfort as a saint, and forbade them to pay reverence to his memory, the resting-place of what remains of him could be collected was before the High Altar of the Abbey Church, and there thousands prayed and miracles were performed. For generations his shrine was the best asset of the church and contributed largely to its rebuilding.

The next important warlike incident at Evesham was also the last; the assault and capture of the town in May 1645 by Massey, the Parliamentary Governor of Gloucester, in spite of a gallant defence by Colonel Legge and his small garrison of 700 men. It was a three-to-one business, for Massey had 2000 men at his disposal. Since then the town has had peace to follow that fruit-farming and market-gardening career which it has pursued with ever-increasing success for two

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

centuries. There are not many tree- and bush-fruits uncultivated in the Vale of Evesham, whose deep rich soil yields abundantly to the growers' efforts, but the plum is the speciality of this Vale. It is not like the fabled Arthurian Vale of Avalon, "where comes not hail nor frost"; for indeed the belated frosts of spring are the bugbear of the Evesham fruit-farmer, and he has been driven in self-defence of late years, to combat those nipping temperatures by burning nightly "smudges" of heavy oil, to take the sting out of the airs that would otherwise congeal his fruit-buds at the time of their setting, and thus ruin his prospect of a crop. The plum—and especially the yellow "egg plum"—is the Evesham speciality, and in April its blossom fills the Vale like snow. But there are comparatively few strangers who see that wonderful spectacle. If the close of April be kind, you may see it and rejoice, but if the month be going out in rain and wind, then it is better to be at home than on Cotswold or in this sink of alluvial earth below those hills. I was caught in April showers at Evesham, on a day that was "arl a-collied like," as they say in these parts, meaning gloomy and overcast; and then "the dag came arn, an' then et mizzled, an' grew worser 'n worser, until et poured suthin tar'ble." And there I stood long in one entry off the High Street until I was tired of it, and then in another, and thus having done Evesham by double entry, ended the unprofitable day by staying the night, while the wind raged, and it hailed and rained and snowed by turns and simultaneously. But the next morning was a glorious one, although the roads were full of puddles and strewn with plum-blossom ravaged from the orchards by those nocturnal blasts.

One need not be long at Evesham to note the extraordinary number of fruit-growers and market-gardeners

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ABBEY GATEWAY, EVESHAM.

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SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

hereabouts, as shown by the many wagons, or floats, on their way to or from the railway station with baskets and hampers of apples, pears, plums, gooseberries, currents, tomatoes, or asparagus; while to travel south of the town, through the favoured Vale, by any road you please, is to see that these are highly specialised cultivations that give as distinct a character to this landscape as do the hop-gardens or the cherry-orchards of Kent.

Leaving Evesham, it will be noticed how very much after the style at Stratford the Avon has been artificially widened and made to wear an almost lakelike effect, with a kind of everyday gala appearance. Here are trim grassy edges and public gardens; and boats and punts to be had for the hiring: a tamed and curbed Avon, like the Round Pond or the Serpentine in Kensington Gardens.

CHAPTER XXI

Broadway—Winchcombe—Shakespearean Associations—Bishop's Cleeve.

"AN Eden of fertility," says an old writer, dwelling with satisfaction upon the Vale of Evesham. The neat orchards of to-day, with their long perspectives, and with bush-fruit planted in between the lines of plum and apple-trees, to economise every inch of this wonderful soil, would seem to him even more of an Eden, neater and more extended than in his day. It is not, you will say, the most picturesque form of cultivation, but it has that best of picturesque beauty to some minds, the picturesqueness of profit. I never yet knew a farmer who could see a cornfield with an artist's eye, and was the better pleased the more the poppies, corn-cockles, and herb-daisies grew in it. For generations past, you will be told, the fruit-growing of the Vale of Evesham has been steadily giving less profit, and scarce a man among the growers but will declare the times are ruining the trade. But the pastures continue to be planted as extensions of the orchards, and the railway traffic in fruit is an increasing branch of business. The only possible inferences, therefore, are that these jolly-looking market-gardeners, who live so well and look so prosperous, thrive on ruination and really cultivate the plum for the æsthetic but fleeting pleasure of seeing every spring that wondrous vale of snow-white blossom that spreads out below Cotswold.

Five miles or so south-eastwards across the vale brings

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

you into Broadway, a village exploited some thirty years ago, and now, converted from the rustic place it was, into a residential district. The old houses and cottages remain, but the simple rustic folk who lived in them are dispersed, and in their old homes live that new class of appreciative and cultivated people with anything at command, from great wealth down to a sufficient independence. A generation ago people of this class would have thought life out of London or such great centres unendurable. They would have missed their town life and the shopping and all the thousand-and-one distractions, and if you had suggested Broadway or any such place, they would indignantly have asked if you wanted them to "bury themselves alive."

And now ideals have changed, or perhaps more exactly, a new class of persons has been born. The wealthy who cannot live away from the centres of life still numerously exist, but there are great numbers of the leisured who have culture and resources within themselves and are not dependent for their amusement upon extraneous things. Also we have in these days of swift travel by road and rail to reckon not only with the "week-end" (who does not trouble Broadway much), but upon that class who will have it both ways, will take the best of town, and when the country is most desirable will leave town to others and retire to such places as this.

These things have made Broadway a very different place from what it was a generation ago. The old people, sons of the soil, have been disinherited, and strangers—not only the "foreigners," of whom the rustics speak, meaning merely people not of the same shire, but foreigners from over-seas—are living in their homes, and they still resent it, even though they may earn more in wages and in "tips" from the tipping classes. The sense of place and of justice too, is strong in the

BROADWAY

blood of the countryman, and he feels it to be a shame that strangers should come from remote countries and covet the house where he and his fathers lived, and turn him out. It is an outcome of the recent appreciation of country life which is creating bitterness and resentment, not at Broadway alone, but all over the country.¹

The broad street, with its grey stone houses, is to outward seeming very much the same, but there is a neatness, an unmistakable sense of money about the place. Every little plot of grass in front of the houses at the upper end, that never used to know the attentions of the mower, has become a lawn; small cottages have been enlarged and thrown into one another, and farmhouses, whose ancient features have been ingeniously adapted by resourceful architects, have become residences of the most delightful type. A little golfing, some motoring, half a dozen other interests and the modern craze for collecting, fill the lives of the people who live here. A retired actress collects pewter, and others scan the neighbourhood with the amiable object of snapping up rare and valuable pieces of china or furniture at much less than their worth from country-folk who are ignorant of their value. There is a curiosity shop in the village, too, where the stranger may find bargains, or may not; and I am told—although I have never seen him—that an innocent-looking old person carrying a rare specimen of a grandfather's clock under his arm may generally be seen crossing the road by the "Lygon Arms," at times when obviously wealthy, and

¹ As these pages go to press a singularly full confirmation of these remarks appears in one of the September 1912 issues of the *Birmingham Post*: "Evesham District Council have decided to build sixty cottages at Broadway under the Housing of the Working Classes Act, and the Local Government Board have sanctioned the borrowing of £10,000." Thus, a number of brand-new dwellings are to be built, to rehouse those villagers whose ancient homes have been taken from them. It is a curious sidelight upon the spread of culture.

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

possibly American and appreciative, occupants of motor-cars drive up. The suggestion is that very often this ingenious person sells his rare, and possibly "unique," clock at a stunning price and will be seen in another day or two with the fellow of it. This has been indignantly denied by the outraged people of Broadway, but re-affirmed in print, and I will leave it at that.

My amiable friend, Mr. S. B. Russell of the "Lygon Arms," is of those who deny this quaint tale. The "Lygon Arms" itself has become a stately house, both without and within. As the "White Hart," of olden days it dates back to 1540. Traditionally Cromwell lay here, the night before the Battle of Worcester, and there are even traditions of Charles the First staying here, ten years earlier. I am not concerned to deny or to affirm these legends. In any case, it would be sheer futility to do so, for no evidence survives. But it is likely enough, for the "White Hart," as it then was, ranked with the best—as it does now, if I may say it. We may readily judge of its then standing, by the fine Jacobean stone entrance doorway, built by John Trevis in 1620, and still admitting to the house. It bears his name and that of Ursula his wife, with the date, and seems to mark a general restoration of the already old hostelry undertaken at that time. John Trevis—or "Treavis"—himself lies in Broadway old church, an interesting old building a mile or more distant from the village, and situated along a lonely wooded road, adjoining an ancient manor-house lately restored with much taste and discrimination. Trevis died in 1641, and has a brass to his memory. This old church is in a solitary situation, and is largely superseded by a modern building near the village. There is a palimpsest brass in the chancel, and hard by is an enriched wooden pulpit, bearing this distinctly apposite and characteristically

THE COTSWOLDS

Reformation-period inscription: "Prov. 19. When the word of God is not preached, the people perish."

But to return to Broadway and the "Lygon Arms." Thirty years ago the house had fallen into a very poor condition, and the great stone building with its fine rooms and its air of being really a private mansion, had declined to the likeness of a village alchouse. It was all the doing of the railways, which had disestablished the coaches, and brought desolation upon this road, in common with most others. But in the dawn of the new era of road travel the present proprietor bought the house, and has by degrees reinstated those stone mullions which had been torn from the windows and replaced at some extraordinarily inappreciative period by modern sashes; and has wrought altogether, a wonderful transformation. The "Lygon Arms," is now as stately a hostelry as ever it was.

I reach the old town of Chipping Campden by another route, and so will not climb on this occasion the steep, mile-long Broadway Hill by which you come this way to it. I will turn instead further south, to Winchcombe.

Winchcombe, it may be thought, is a far cry from Stratford-on-Avon. It is twenty-four miles distant, but though twenty-four miles formed in olden days a very much more considerable journey than now, the place and its surroundings were familiar to Shakespeare. If you would seek here local allusions in the plays, wherewith to belabour the Bacon fanatics, there is no lack in this district of "Cotsall," those Cotswolds on which Page's fallow greyhound was outrun: a portion of those "wilds in Gloucestershire," whose "high wild hills and rough uneven ways, Draw out our miles and make them wearisome," as Northumberland complains in *King Richard the Second*.

Shakespeare knew most that was to be known about

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

the Cotswold Hills, and when he makes Shallow bid Davy "sow the headland with red wheat," he alludes to an olden local custom of sowing "red lammas" wheat early in the season.

He was familiar with the consistency of Tewkesbury mustard, with which, doubtless, the Stratford folk of his day relished their meat, and he finds in it an apt illustration of a dull man's attempted sprightliness: as where he makes Falstaff say, "He a good wit, hang him baboon! His wit is as thick as Tewkesbury mustard."

Here, in the neighbourhood of Winchcombe, familiar rhymes, generally uncomplimentary, upon surrounding places are attributed to him almost as freely as are those upon the "Eight Villages." They tell of—

"Dirty Gretton, Dingy Greet,
Beggary Winchcombe, Sudeley sweet;
Hanging Hartshorn, Whittington Bell,
Dull Andoversford, and Merry Frog Mill."

The epithets vary with the different narrators of the lines. Those quoted above do not in general fit the places, except beautiful Sudeley and perhaps "once upon a time" Frog Mill, which, in spite of its name was probably of old a sufficiently merry place, for it is the name of an ancient and once renowned inn adjoining Andoversford: an inn where men made merry until the railway came hard by and disestablished its custom.

Winchcombe it is difficult to believe ever "beggary." It is an old and picturesque market town in the Cotswolds, with a noble and particularly striking Perpendicular church, with clerestoried nave and central tower, and an array of monstrously gibbering gargoyles. Next it is a curious old inn, oddly named the "Corner Cupboard." Here, too, at the "George" inn, are some traces of the hostelry formerly maintained by the Abbots

' OLD JOHN NAPS '

of Winchcombe for pilgrims to their altars. Sudeley Castle, in its park a mile away, is a place of great interest, now restored, with a modern altar-tomb and effigy to Catherine Parr, sixth and last wife of Henry the Eighth, who resided here.

Gretton is a village two miles from Winchcombe, on the Tewkesbury road, and Greet is a wayside hamlet in between. We have no authority for the Shakespearean authorship of the rhymes, but "old John Naps of Greece," who is mentioned with "Peter Turf and Henry Pimpernell" as cronies of Christopher Sly, was not "of Greece" but of this place. "Greece" is one of those many misprints that in the early folios and quartos continue to puzzle critics. In one of them Hamlet declares he can tell the difference between "a hawk and a handsaw," and it was long before "handsaw" was seen to be a printer's error for "heronshaw," a young heron. To emigrate John Naps from Greet to Greece was a comparatively easy matter, in type, if not in actual travel. We will allow, for argument's sake, that this by itself might not be convincing evidence that Shakespeare knew Greet and intended to refer to it; but we have Davy, Shallow's servant in the Second Part of *Henry the Fourth*, referring to "William Visor of Woncot," who has an action at law against "Clement Perkes of the hill." By "Woncot," is meant the hamlet of Woodmancote, three miles west of Winchcombe, a place then and now called "Woncot," locally. The name, correctly spelt in the original edition of 1600, has been mistakenly altered to "Wincot," in later issues. At Woodmancote the family of Visor, sometimes spelled "Vizard," was in Shakespeare's time and until recent years living. It lies beneath Stinchcombe Hill, locally "the Hill," which rises to the imposing height of 915 feet. There, it has

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

been ascertained, the Perkes family then had their home. The name of Perkes was variously spelled "Purkis" and "Purchas." The last representative appears to have been one "J. Purchas, Esq., of Stinchcombe Hill, near Dursley, Glos.," who is mentioned in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1812, as having died at Margate, in his seventy-fifth year.

It is a tremendous and a beautiful view from the lofty plateau of Cleeve Common as you go from Winchcombe to Woodmancote and Bishop's Cleeve, on the way to Tewkesbury. I shall never forget the glory of that evening of early summer when, romping out of Cheltenham, our car breasted the long rise to this view-point and we halted here as the westering sun sank across the golden-blue distance of the Vale of Avon, with the Malvern Hills, grey and indistinct, beyond. Distant views of the Promised Land could have made no better promise of beauty and plenty.

From this Pisgah height you come "down-a-down-a," as Ophelia says, to Bishop's Cleeve, thinking upon the sheer appropriateness of the place-name; not the "Bishop" part of it, but the "Cleeve": which stands of course for "cleft," or "cliff." Thenceforward, the way lies along the levels into Tewkesbury, through Stoke Orchard and Treddington.

CHAPTER XXII

Tewkesbury.

THE little town of Tewkesbury, which numbers about 5500 inhabitants, and is one of the most cheerful and bustling, and withal one of the most picturesque towns in England, occupies a remarkable situation. Not remarkable in the scenic way, for a more nearly level stretch of very often flooded meadow lands you will not see for miles. The site of Tewkesbury is close upon, but not actually on, the confluence of England's greatest river, the broad and turbid and rather grim Severn, with the Avon. All around, but in grey and blue distances, are hills: the Cotswolds, the Bredon Hills, the greater Malverns, and the yet greater, but more distant Welsh mountains; but the Severn and the Avon flow through levels that extend considerable distances. When those two rivers—so different in every respect; in size, in character, and in the very colour of their waters, the Avon being clear and bright, and the Severn a sullen, dun-coloured waterway—unite to flood these low-lying lands the only way to travel comfortably about the neighbourhood is by boat. Tewkesbury is at all times particularly old-world and quaint, and it makes on these occasions an excellent substitute for Venice. This peculiarity, or rather this contingency, let us say, perhaps explains the at first sight rather singular fact that the town should have been built on the Avon, half a mile from its junction with the Severn, and not upon the larger river at all. It looks like a wanton disregard

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

of the advantages that the Severn navigation would bring to the town, with riverside wharves and quays; but those who selected the site probably considered the Severn to be too dangerous a river, and so set their town back half a mile or so from its banks. A consequence is that the external trade of Tewkesbury has always been negligible, and to-day, although the text-books tell you of its industry of making shirt-fronts—"particularly stiff shirt-fronts"—and the olden one of flour-milling, which is carried on by Avonside, the scale of their activities has never become large.

The founding of Tewkesbury is said to have been the work of a seventh-century religious Saxon named Theoc, who established a church here; but the Roman station, *Etocessa*, was here first, and although the place-name is supposed to derive from Theoc, by way of "Theocsbyrig," and the Domesday version, "Teodechesberie," too little is known of him for us to take much interest in it. It is rather interesting, however, to consider that, the site being among water-meadows, and that the land at the confluence of Severn and Wye is called "the Ham," how very near Tewkesbury was to being called "Tewkesham."

The monastery that was thus seated by the two rivers became a flourishing Benedictine house, and after its full share of the early adversities of fire and sword, famine and flood, it resulted in the building of the grand Abbey church, which is still the greatest architectural glory of the town. The re-founder of the monastery and builder of this noble and solemn example of Norman architecture was Robert Fitz Hamon, Earl of Gloucester, the greatest of the early Lords Marchers of Wales, and overlord of Glamorgan, who died in 1197, fighting in foreign wars. He had seen so many post-mortem bequests go wrong and never reach their intended

TEWKESBURY ABBEY

destination that he determined to perform his re-founding of monastery and church in his own lifetime. Both were well advanced when he died, and the Abbey was finally consecrated in 1223; a remarkable example of expedition for those times. I do not propose to narrate the story of the Abbey, which has no such picturesque and fantastic falsehoods as that of Evesham. The monastery ran its course and was suppressed with others by Henry the Eighth, and the Abbey church was saved by the townsfolk, who paid the King the equivalent of £5000 for the site and fabric. And so it remains to us to this day, more venerable by lapse of time, minus its Lady Chapel, and with evidences of the puritan zeal of rather more than a hundred years later than Henry's great reform; but it is yet the veritable building of Fitz Hamon's and of the generations that succeeded him.

You cannot see this great Abbey church to advantage from the town. It is only from the open meadows by the Severn, and its tributary brooks, where the little town is to be guessed at by the evidence of a few roofs and chimneys, that its great scale and solemn majesty are fully apparent. There the great central Norman tower and the magnificent and unique West Front of the same period are seen in their proper relation with the surroundings. The long outline is very like that of St. Albans, but 237 feet less; St. Albans Abbey being 550 feet long, and Tewkesbury 313 feet.

The near view of the West Front and its great and deeply-embayed Norman window, filled not unsuitably with the Perpendicular tracery of three hundred years later, is no disillusionment; it is, after the glorious West Front of Peterborough, one of the most striking compositions of the kind in England, and the flanking Norman tourelles and spirelets have by contrast the most delicate appearance.

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

Entering the building, a massive Norman nave is seen, singularly like that of Gloucester cathedral, and no doubt designed by the same hand. The same massive but disproportionately lofty columns, with dwarfed triforium and clerestory, proclaim a similar origin. The columns are Fitz Hamon's work, and the clerestory above, and the stone-vaulted roof are the additions of over two centuries later, when the builders had grown more daring and risked a heavy stone roof in place of the former flat wooden one. Fitz Hamon's transepts also remain and his choir, in its essentials; although in the same Decorated period which witnessed the addition of the clerestory and stone vaulting to the nave the Norman choir was remodelled. To this period belong the seven windows filled with splendid old stained glass, representing all good benefactors, from Fitz Hamon onwards, praying for heavenly grace, but clinging to their ancient heraldic cognisances of long descent as tenaciously as though the authority of Garter King-at-Arms and all his fellow-kings and pursuivants extended to Heaven, and St. Peter was authorised to admit to the best places only those who could display these patents of gentility. It is glorious old glass, more than much damaged and time-worn, but still splendid in design and colour.

Behind the choir still runs the semicircular ambulatory, as on the old Norman plan, but the Lady Chapel has disappeared. Here too are some of the ancient chapels formerly clustered about the east end. Here are some mouldering swords, deeply bitten into by Time's teeth, from the battlefield of Tewkesbury. Fitz Hamon's chantry is not of his period: it was rebuilt more than three hundred years later; proof that he, and the health of his immortal part were kept in mind, and incidentally showing us that not all gratitude is,



HIGH STREET, TEWKESBURY.

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

as cynics would declare, "a lively sense of favours to come."

The so-called "Warwick" chantry, built 1422 by Isabel le Despencer in memory of her first husband, Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Abergavenny, is in the last, and most elaborated style of Gothic architecture and decoration. There are many other monuments: including the beautiful one of Hugh le Despencer and his wife Elizabeth. Their splendidly sculptured alabaster figures lie there with a calm indifference contrasting with his violent end, for he was executed in 1349, at Hereford. So often did the great nobles of those centuries suffer from the headsman's axe and with such frequency did they die on the battlefield that it became a matter of pride to declare how rarely they ended peacefully and of old age, in their beds. It was almost a slur upon one's personal character to pass in this way, when one might in the last resource join some desperate rebellion and be handsomely slain; or at the very least of it, be taken and properly beheaded.

These philosophical and historical considerations bring one, by a natural transition, to the Battle of Tewkesbury, fought in the meadows to the south of the town on May Day 1471. The place where the fight raged fiercest was close by the Gloucester road, in the field still called "Bloody Meadow," whose name it is understood the town council, in the interests of the rising generation, are keenly desirous of seeing changed to something more respectable.

If you have never been to Tewkesbury, the battle will be a little unreal to you. You may know perfectly well "all about the war, and what they killed each other for," and you may even be a partisan of either White Rose or Red, and may throw up your cap for those rival

THE BATTLE OF TEWKESBURY

Houses of York or Lancaster; but if you have never visited the scene where this great fight raged, it will remain shadowy. But in Tewkesbury town, whose streets are still astonishingly rich in old timbered houses that stood on the morning of that great clash of arms where they do now, it is a vital thing.

It was the last desperate venture of the Lancastrians, stricken to the ground on many an earlier occasion, but always hitherto recovering, to try conclusions again, for sake of right. At Towton, Blore Heath, Hexham, and other places they had been slaughtered, and such victories as Wakefield, in which the Yorkists were decimated, were of no permanent value. Only a month before Tewkesbury they had been signally defeated at Barnet, and their cause apparently broken; but here again the party was re-formed. Queen Margaret, whose devotion and sorrows are among the most pitiful records of history, had come from France with her son, Prince Edward, the young hope of the Red Rose. Gathering a force at Exeter, they advanced towards the midlands, hoping to join hands with Welsh sympathisers. But the treacherous Severn, coming down from those Mortimer borderlands where the White Rose had ever been strongest, proved itself on this occasion the most useful ally of the Yorkists. It was in flood and prevented that junction of the two Lancastrian armies whose combined force might have given them the day and changed the course of the nation's story.

The Yorkists, commanded by Edward the Sixth, came up from the direction of Cheltenham and found their opponents drawn up on the "plains near Tewkesbury," as Shakespeare has it, in the Third Part of *Henry the Sixth*. The battle was lost to the Lancastrians partly through their being deceived by a pretended flight of the troops commanded by Richard, Duke of Gloucester,

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

and in a great measure by quarrels among themselves. Their ranks were broken and the battle was continued and ended by fighting and heavy slaughter in the streets of the town. Finally the defeated Lancastrians took refuge in the Abbey church, from which they would have been dragged had not the monks in solemn procession prevented it. Shakespeare adopts Holinshed's account of the death of Prince Edward.

Holinshed tells us that proclamation being made that a life-annuity of £100 should be paid to whoever brought the Prince, dead or alive, and that, if living, his life should be spared, Sir Richard Crofts brought him forth, "a fair and well-proportioned young gentleman, whom, when King Edward had well-advised, he asked him how he durst so presumptuously enter his realm with banner displayed, whereupon the prince boldly answered, saying, 'To recover my father's kingdom and heritage from his grandfather to him, and from him after him to me lineally descended'; at which words King Edward thrust him from him, or (as some say) stroke him with his gauntlet, whom directly George, Duke of Clarence; Richard, Duke of Gloucester; Thomas Grey, and William, Lord Hastings, that stood by, cruelly murdered; for the which cruel act the more part of the doers in their latter days drank the like cup by the righteous justice and due punishment of God. His body was homely interred in the church of the monastery of the black monks of Tewkesbury."

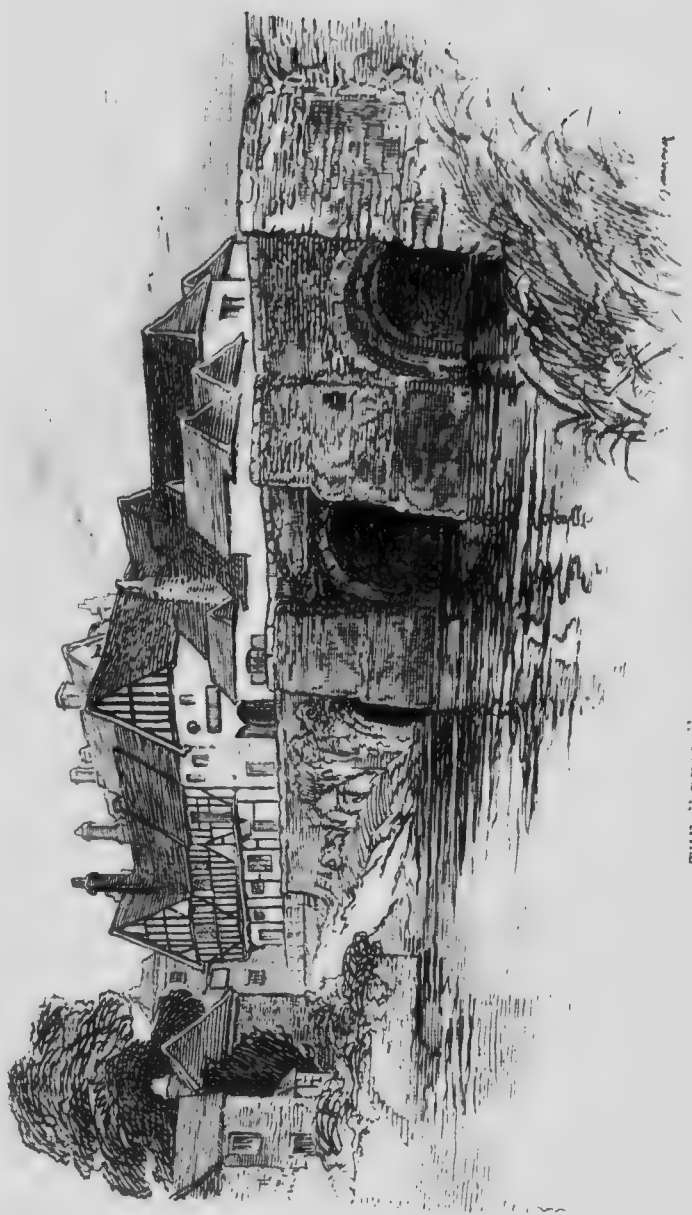
The thanksgiving of the next day, Sunday, held by the Yorkists in the Abbey was one of those services in which the victors in a battle have always adopted the Almighty as a partisan. In the same time-honoured fashion the King of Prussia, delighting in the defeats of the French in the war of 1870-71, was in the habit of exclaiming "Gott mitt uns," and sending pious

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THE "BEAR" INN AND BRIDGE, TEWKESBURY.

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

telegrams to the Queen, caricatured by the humorist of the time—

“Rejoice with me, my dear Augusta,
We’ve had another awful buster;
Ten thousand Frenchmen sent below—
Praise God from whom all blessings flow!”

The thanksgiving was followed next day by a ruthless, cold-blooded massacre of those who had been hiding in the town. On the Tuesday the great nobles, leaders in the fight, were executed, and the Yorkist vengeance was complete.

The nodding old gabled houses of Tewkesbury—many of them nodding so amazingly that it is surprising they do not fall—include a number of ancient inns: the “Wheatsheaf” and the “Bell” prominent among them. The “Bell,” hard by the Abbey and the old flour-mills, has a bowling-green and owns associations with Mrs. Craik’s once-popular story, *John Halifax, Gentleman*: which, I believe, was considered eminently a tale for the young person. “No,” said a bookseller long since, in my own hearing, to a hesitating prospective purchaser, “it is not a novel: it is an improving story, and may be read on Sundays.” I do not know what is read by the young person nowadays, either on Sundays or week-days, but I am quite sure it is not *John Halifax, Gentleman*, and I am equally sure that the young person will in these times resent any choice made for him or her, and read or not read what he or she chooses. But the monument to Mrs. Craik in the Abbey is inscribed to the author of the book, and as it is evidently a great source of interest to visitors, *John Halifax* is perhaps not quite so out-of-date as we suppose him to be.

The “Hop Pole” and the “Swan,” in their present form, belong to a later age; the first being the house

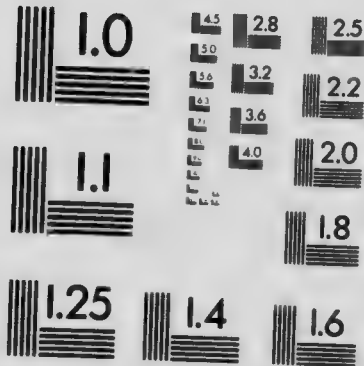
THE 'OLD BLACK BEAR'

where Mr. Pickwick and his friends made merry and drank so astonishingly. But the "Old Black Bear," as you leave the town for Worcester, is easily the most picturesque of all; in itself and in its situation by the rugged old Avon bridge. The sign was, of course, originally that of the "Bear and Ragged Staff."



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CHAPTER XXIII

Clopton House—Billesley—The Home of Shakespeare's Mother,
Wilmcote — Aston Cantlow—Wootton Wawen—Shakespeare
Hall, Rowington.

THERE is a mansion of much local fame rather more than a mile out of Stratford, off the Henley road : the manor-house of Clopton, for long past the seat of the Hodgson family, but formerly that of one of the ancient families of Clopton, who are found not only in Warwickshire and Gloucestershire, but in Suffolk as well. Widespread as they once were, I believe that the very name is now extinct.

There is necessarily much mention of the Clopton name in these pages, for Sir Hugh Clopton was the great fifteenth-century benefactor of Stratford. He was a younger son of the owner of this manor. The house has been time and again altered and partly rebuilt, but it still contains portraits of the Cloptons on the great Jacobean staircase, and painted on the walls of an attic, once used as a secret chapel by Roman Catholics, are to this day the black-letter texts upon which Ambrose Rookwood, prominent in the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, must have looked. He had rented Clopton House for a time, in order to be conveniently near his friends, and to the meeting-place on Dunsmore, which the conspirators had appointed the scene of their rebellion when King and Parliament should have been blown sky-high by Guy Fawkes' thirty-two barrels of gunpowder. After the failure of the plot and the arrest of the

CLOPTON

conspirators, the High Bailiff of Stratford was instructed to seize Ambrose Rookwood's effects at Clopton House. An inventory of them is preserved in the Birthplace Museum at Stratford, and affords some quaint reading. Chalices, crosses, crucifixes, and a variety of obviously Papist articles, are in company with "an oulde cloake bagge," whose value was sixpence, and "a white nagge," twenty shillings. The High Bailiff evidently cleared the house, taking all he could find, for mention is made of "one pair of old boots, 2*d*. these being the goods of Ambrose Fuller." There is a further note that Ambrose Fuller had his old boots restored to him; the High Bailiff being presumably unable to find anything treasonable in them.

Shakespeare is said to have taken his idea of Ophelia from Margaret Clopton, who in the misery of disappointed love is supposed to have drowned herself in a well in the gardens in 1592. A Charlotte Clopton, too, is supposed to have been buried alive in the Clopton vault in Stratford church in 1564, when the plague visited the neighbourhood, and thus to have given Shakespeare a scene in *Romeo and Juliet*. But it is only fair to say that the stories are legendary and not sustained by any known facts in the Clopton family history.

From Clopton we will retrace our steps to Stratford, and thence set out anew, to visit some outlying villages of interest, better reached from the road to Alcester.

The Alcester road is the least interesting road out of Stratford. It leads past the Great Western Railway station, and thence up Red Hill, reaching Alcester, the Roman *Alauna*, in seven and a half miles. There is little joy or interest to be got out of Alcester, which is a pleasant enough little town of 3500 inhabitants and a manufacture of needles, but not thrilling. There is

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

still some unenclosed land along this road, on the left, a rather wild upland common—the “unshrubb’d down”; and it is a tumbled up and down country on the right, where Billesley stands. Billesley is a parish, with a parish church and an ancient manor-house, but no village. I can imagine the tourist—the cyclist, of course, who is a more enterprising person than most—saying, as he sees Billesley on the map, “I will put up there,” and I can imagine him, further, getting there under circumstances of night and rain and wind, and finding it to be the most impossible of places to stay at. For there is no inn, and not the slightest chance of hospitality. But it is well enough if you come to it in daytime, for it has the charm of singularity: the strangeness of the old manor-house behind its lofty enclosing garden-walls and the weirdly rebuilt eighteenth-century church at the end of a farm-road which you dispute with porkers and clattering fowls. Billesley church is one of the claimants for the honour of witnessing Shakespeare’s marriage, but on what evidence the claim rests no one can tell, and, in any case, it was entirely rebuilt afterwards. The tradition is probably only a hazy association with the marriage of his grand-daughter, Elizabeth Hall, whose wedding took place in the former building in 1639. Little belief, either, can be given to the panelled room in Billesley Hall, said to have been a library in Shakespeare’s youth, in which he was allowed to study.

Downhill and to the right, and you come to Wilmcote, the home of Shakespeare’s mother, Mary Arden. It was in her time merely a hamlet of Aston Cantlow, but is now a separate ecclesiastical parish, with an uninteresting church. Wilmcote is not a particularly inviting place, and not one of a number of boys playing cricket could tell me where was the home of Shake-

WILMCOTE

speare's mother. However, in a place like Wilmcote it does not take long to solve such a point, even if it were to come to a house-to-house inquiry. The home of the Ardens, yeomen-farmers, seems to modern ideas quite a humble house. It is one of a row of ancient timber-framed and plastered cottage-like houses, with a large farmyard at the back. Rambling, low-ceilinged rooms



THE ARDEN HOUSE, HOME OF SHAKESPEARE'S MOTHER, WILMCOTE.

with ingle-nooks in the fireplaces form the interior. Some day, I suppose, when the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust has ceased to expend much money in the collection of rare editions and in paying fat pensions to its superannuated servants, it will seek to purchase the Arden home, and show to Shakespearean travellers the house in which Robert Arden, a sixteenth-century yeoman of some standing and some pretensions to gentility, yet sat at table with his farm-servants in the old way, just as in the remoter parts of the West of England is still done.

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

It is generally supposed that Wilmcote is the place referred to by Shakespeare in the induction to the *Taming of the Shrew* as "Wincot." The name is locally pronounced in that way, as it would be when we consider the difficulty in ordinary rustic speech of twisting the tongue round "Wilmcote." But reasons are given on p. 169 for identifying it with Wincot in Quinton. There is, however, another place which claims the honour; the unlovely Wilnecote, a brick and tile-manufacturing settlement on the Watling Street, over twenty-five miles distant. It also is locally "Wincot," and in Shakespeare's time brewed a famous tippie. Sir Aston Cokain, whose verses were published as near Shakespeare's own day as 1658, had no difficulty in identifying it. Writing to his friend, Mr. Clement Fisher, who resided at Wilnecote, whom he addresses "of Wincott," he says—

"Shakespeare your Wincot ale hath much renown'd
That fox'd a beggar so by chance was found
Sleeping that there needed not many a word
To make him to believe he was a lord.
But you affirm (and in it seem most eager)
'Twill make a Lord as drunk as any beggar,
Bid Norton brew such ale as Shakespeare fancies,
Did put Kit Sly into such lordly trances;
And let us meet there for a fit of gladness,
And drink ourselves merry in sober sadness."

It is quite evident, among other things, that Sir Aston Cokain wrote pretty bad verse, but the point to be emphasised is that there were certainly in Shakespeare's time three "Wincots," any one of which might have served his turn. But the vanished ale-house of Wincot in Quinton is the place more particularly meant by him.

"Stephen Sly" alluded to in the play, was a real person who seems to have been what people call "a character." He was probably a half-witted creature,



WOOTTON WAWEN CHURCH.

To face p. 224

WOOTTON WAWEN

the butt of Stratford, and occasionally appears in the unimpeachable records of the town as a servant of the Combes of Welcombe, or as a labourer. There also appears in those same chronicles in later years a Joan Sly, who was fined in 1630 for travelling on the Sabbath: an offence not so great in itself, but very reprehensible in the eyes of the Puritan magistrates of that time.

The parent village of Aston Cantlow is two miles from Wilmcote. The site only of the ancient castle of the Cantilupes remains, behind the church, in a tangled moat still sometimes flooded by the little river Alne. The old Court House, a long half-timbered building now divided into three or four cottages, is the chief feature of the village street.

Wootton Wawen, in something less than another three miles, owes the first part of its singular name to its olden situation in the Forest of Arden, and the second part to the Saxon lord of the place, a landowner named Wagen, whose name appears as witness to the foundation charter of the monastery at Coventry founded by Leofric, the husband of Godiva, in 1043. It stands at a junction of roads, where the highway from Stratford through Bearley comes swinging up round a corner from the channels of the Alne, and runs, broad and imposing, on to Henley-in-Arden and Birmingham. The church, occupying a knoll, is a strange but beautiful group, with central tower in the Decorated style, a rather plain south chapel of the same period, and a beautiful nave clerestory of the fifteenth century. A very large Decorated chancel east window has its moulding set with elaborate crockets.

The stranger, attracted by this noble church, tries the door. It is locked, but before he can turn away it will be opened by a girl, who says, "There is a fee of sixpence." There always is!

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

You render tribute for sake of seeing the interior, uneasily suspecting that it is another sixpence gone towards some scheme of alteration which would not have your approval; but these things cannot be helped. The interior discloses some unexpected features, the lower part of the tower being unmistakably Saxon



SHAKESPEARE HALL, ROWINGTON.

work, with very narrow arches to nave and chancel. Here are two curious enclosed carved oak pews that were perhaps originally chantries, and a fine fifteenth-century oak pulpit. A desk with eight chained books, and an ancient chest with ironwork in the shape of fleurs-de-lis, together with effigies and brasses to the Harewell family, complete an interesting series of antiquities. Here is buried William Somerville, author of *The Chase*, who died in 1742.

'SHAKESPEARE HALL'

The town of Henley-in-Arden, with its broad and picturesque street and the "White Swan" inn, is much afflicted in these latter days by excessive motor traffic from Birmingham. Beaudesert, a seat of the Marquis of Anglesey, adjoins it, and Preston Bagot, on the east, lies in a once-remote district. The sign of the "Crab Mill" inn, on the way, alludes to a former manufacture of cider here. The old manor-house of Preston Bagot, beside the road, is locally said to have been the first house built in the Forest of Arden, but of that we cannot, obviously, be at all sure. There is a house about four miles onward, at Rowington Green, on the other side of Rowington, which looks, in parts, older. It is the romantic-looking house known as "Shakespeare Hall," for many years a farmhouse, but now the residence of Mr. J. W. Ryland, F.S.A. It dates back to the early part of the fifteenth century, and had until recently a moat. Traditionally, it was the home of one Thomas Shakespeare, a brother of William Shakespeare's father; and Shakespeare is further said to have composed *As You Like It* in the room over the porch. We need not believe that tradition, which has no evidence to warrant it, although the house was once the home of one of the very numerous Shakespeare families in Arden, the poet's family were relations. The massive horseman's "upping-block" has been allowed to remain, beside the front-door.

CHAPTER XXIV

Welcombe—Snitterfield—Warwick—Leicester's Hospital—St. Mary's Church and the Beauchamp Chapel.

THE distance between Stratford and Warwick is eight miles, and the road, the broad highway, runs direct. It is an excellent road, but for those who do not care overmuch for main routes, however beautiful, in these times, a more excellent way, for a portion of the journey at any rate, is by Snitterfield. You turn off to the left from the tree-bordered main road at a point a mile and a half from Stratford, well in view of the lofty obelisk on the hillside at Welcombe which was built in 1873 to perpetuate the memory of the obscure person, a certain Mark Phillips, who had erected the mansion of Welcombe Lodge in 1869. Without the aid of this monument he would by now have been completely forgotten; but it is 120 feet in height and prominently visible from amazing distances, and so its object is attained. Not perhaps exactly in the way originally intended, for being in a district where most things are associated in some way with Shakespeare, it is generally supposed to be one of them, and when the disappointed stranger finds himself thus deluded, he usually reflects upon Mark Phillips in the most scathing terms.

Up at Welcombe are those Dingles already referred to. The way to Snitterfield takes you uphill, past lands that once belonged to Shakespeare, and by a pond which is all that is left of the lake of Snitterfield Hall, a mansion demolished in 1820. Here the road has reached a



LEICESTER'S HOSPITAL, WARWICK.

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

considerable height, commanding beautiful views down over the valley of the Avon at Hampton Lucy and Charlecote.

Snitterfield village is embowered amid elms. The church is a rustic building in the Decorated style, with seventeenth-century pulpit and enriched woodwork of the same period furnishing the altar-rails. Here the Rev. Richard Jago was vicar for twenty years, dying in 1781. His duties did not bear heavily upon him, and he occupied most of his time in writing a long poem, "Edgehill, or the Rural Prospect Delineated and Moralised," a published work which no one ever reads, the prospect of moralising held forth on the title-page scaring the timid. His vicarage remains, and on its lawn are still the three silver birches planted by his three daughters. There are some beautiful lime-trees and an ancient yew in the churchyard. No relic of Henry Shakespeare, William Shakespeare's uncle, or of his father or grandfather, who lived at Snitterfield, now remains.

The road now trends to the right, and, steeply descending, regains the main route into Warwick. The town of Warwick looms nobly before the traveller approaching from the west. The broad level highway makes direct for it, and over the trees that border the road you see, as a first glimpse of the historic place, the lofty tower of St. Mary's church, rising apparently an enormous height, and looking a most worshipful specimen of architecture. On a nearer approach it sinks into less prominence, and, passing through an old suburb, with a porch-house on the right, formerly the "Malt-Shovel" inn, the West Gate of the town, with its chapel above it, takes prominence.

The West Gate is one of the two surviving ancient gateways of Warwick and leads steeply up into the

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LEICESTER'S HOSPITAL: THE COURTYARD.

[To face p. 240.]

LEICESTER'S HOSPITAL

town beneath a rude-ribbed arch of great massiveness, based sturdily upon the dull red sandstone rock. It is a very picturesque and in every way striking composition, and if it were not for the even more picturesque scene provided by Leicester's Hospital, just within the gate, would be often illustrated. But the nodding black and white gables of that almshouse effectually attract the greater notice. The West Gate, with the chapel above, dates from about 1360. Nowadays it is almost only the curious visitor who passes through the long, tunnel-like arch, gazing with astonishment at the sudden outcrop of rock on which the building stands, and at the ribbed stone roof supporting the chapel. A roadway has been made to the right of the gate, through the town walls, and the traffic goes that way by choice, obscuring the ancient defensive function and importance of this entrance to the town. A chapel also occupies the like position over the East Gate, and shows that the people of Warwick prayed as well as watched.

The Leicester Hospital, so-called because founded by Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, looks down with admirable effect from its elevated position on the left hand, as you come up into the town; but it would look even better if it were properly kept. It very urgently needs a thorough overhauling, not in the necessity for any structural repairs, but with the object of treating the buildings in a sympathetic and cultured way. There is a vast difference between photographic views of what is called, in the Wardour Street way, "Leicester's" Hospital, and the actual effect of looking upon the place with one's own eyes. The Hospital, in fact, looks very much better in photographs than it reveals itself to the disappointed gaze: simply because those responsible for the upkeep of it do not understand

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

how to treat the old timbers, and have smeared them over with black paint.

This Hospital or Almshouse occupies the site of the ancient united religious and charitable guilds of Holy Trinity and St. George-the-Martyr, with some of their surviving buildings. These united fraternities had numerous activities. They supported the priests who served in the chapels over East and West gates, and contributed towards the keep of others in the parish church; being also largely responsible for the maintenance of the great bridge, now and for long past in ruins, which carried the Banbury road across the Avon, in front of Warwick Castle. They also supported eight poor persons of the Guild. In common with all other religious, or semi-religious institutions, the Guild was dissolved in the time of Henry the Eighth, and its buildings were granted by Edward the Sixth to Sir Nicholas le Strange, from whom Dudley acquired them; or, according to another version of these transactions, Dudley had a gift of them direct from the town of Warwick, to which the Guild had voluntarily transferred its property. This gift to the magnificent Dudley, the newly-created Earl of Leicester and possessor of vast wealth and power, was not for his own personal advantage, but for the purpose of helping him to establish an almshouse, which he at once proceeded to do, in the interest of "twelve impotent persons, not having above £5 per annum of their own, and such as either had been, or should be maimed in the warrs of the Queen, her service, her heirs and successors, especially under the conduct of the said Earl or his heirs, or had been tenants to him and his heirs, and born in the Counties of Warwick or Gloucester, or having their dwelling there for five years before; and in case there happen to be none such hurt in the Warrs, then other poor of Kenilworth,

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LEICESTER'S HOSPITAL

Warwick, Stratford super Avon in this county, or of Wootton under Edge or Erlingham in Gloucestershire, to be recommended by the Minister and Churchwardens where they last had their abode; which poor men are to have Liveries (viz. Gowns of blew cloth, with a Ragged Staff embroydered on the left sleeve) and not to go into the Town without them."

Leicester and his magnificence, and all the direct lineage of the Dudleys have disappeared long ago. Leicester himself, and after him his brother Ambrose, died childless, and the patronage of the Hospital passed to their sister Mary, who married Sir Henry Sidney of Penshurst. Thence it has descended to Lord de L'isle and Dudley, the present representative of the Dudleys and the Sidneys.

The entrance is by a stone gateway bearing the inscription "*Hospitium Collegiatum Roberti Dvdlei Comitis Leycestriae 1571.*" The great Dudley's picturesque buildings deserve to be better kept, for they are among the daintiest examples of highly enriched half-timbering in England. Passing beneath an archway with a sundial overhead, you enter a small quadrangle with a quaint staircase on one side, and gables with elaborate pierced verge-boards looking down upon the scene. The famous Warwick badge of the Bear and Ragged Staff surmounts the finials and lurks under the eaves, in frequent repetition, together with the Porcupine, that of the Sidneys. On the further side, over the windows of the Master's Lodge, is the painted inscription, "Honour all men; love the brotherhood; fear God; and honour the King," a quadripartite injunction which we may confidently affirm, no man ever yet observed. Our own—but much more other people's—natures will have to be very greatly amended before we are prepared to "honour all men."

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

You pay sixpence to be shown over the Hospital, and one of the twelve bedesmen acts as guide to the buildings and the very miscellaneous collections accumulated in them. Nowadays the "blue gown" has become black, and the Bear and Ragged Staff badge is in silver, instead of embroidery. A welcome change has come over their headgear. Instead of the more or less rusty silk hats they wore during the greater part of the nineteenth century, they have now a "beefeater" hat similar to those worn by the Tower warders in London, but wholly in black. The bedesmen no longer dine together as once they did, but each separately in his own quarters, because they could not always obey the injunction to "love the brotherhood," and grew cantankerous in company, and quarrelled; but here is still the kitchen they have in common, containing many other things one does not expect to find in kitchens; an odd assortment, a Malay kris, a Russian helmet from the stricken fields of the Crimea, an oak cabinet from Kenilworth Castle, and a framed piece of needlework said to have been executed by Lady Robert Dudley, whom "historians" will persist in styling either by her maiden name, Amy Robsart, or else by the title of Countess of Leicester, she having died or been murdered many years before her husband became an Earl. Perhaps we had better emphasise the word *said*. Beneath that framed piece of needlework is a Saxon—more or less Saxon—chair. A piece of Gibraltar rock, polished is a further item displaying the catholicity of taste displayed here, together with the muskets with which the inmates of the Hospital were armed when the Chartist rising was supposed to threaten the security of Warwick.

The banqueting hall, a surviving portion of the old Guild buildings, very greatly needs restoration. It has

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LEICESTER HOSPITAL (ONE OF THE BUILDINGS)

ST. MARY'S

been grossly used and subdivided, the Minstrel Gallery having been taken out of it in order to provide a fine additional room for the Master's residence; the Master being, of course, a clergyman with a fine fat stipend; the person who has the very best of it at Leicester's Hospital. In this once-beautiful banqueting hall, with its noble roof of Spanish chestnut, whitened with age, James the First was entertained by Fulke Greville in 1617. Coal-bins and wash-houses now subdivide it.

Flights of stone stairs lead up from the Hospital over the West Gate and into the chapel, a fine spacious building where the twelve old men have to attend every week-day morning at ten o'clock and listen to the perfunctory service read by the Master. In addition to this spiritual treat, they attend service at the parish church on Sundays. There is nothing to say about the interior of the chapel; it was "restored" by Sir Gilbert Scott, and so there would not be.

For dulness and pretentious ugliness combined, the town of Warwick would be difficult to match; and the ugliest and dullest part of it is that main street called Jury Street, stretching between the West Gate and the East. The ugliness is due to the great fire of 1694, which destroyed a great part of the town and necessitated a rebuilding at a period when architects were obsessed with the idea of designing "stately" buildings. What they considered stately we nowadays look upon with a shudder and style heavy and unimaginative.

But the weirdest building in the town is that parish church of St. Mary whose tower looks in the distance so stately. There were once ten churches in Warwick and there are now but two. St. Mary's was almost entirely destroyed in the great fire, in consequence of the frightened townsfolk storing their furniture in it, for safety. The church itself was not threatened,

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

but some of the articles hurriedly placed in it were alight, and thus it shared the fate of much else.

The rebuilding of St. Mary's was completed in 1704, as an inscription on the tower informs us. I think those who placed that inscription here intended a Latin pun, a play upon the name of Queen Anne and the word *anno*, for "year"; for thus it runs: "*Annaeauspiciis A^o memorabili 1704.*" One scarcely knows which is the more deplorable, the building or the pun; the first, probably, because not every one can see the play upon words, but the tower is an outrage impossible to escape.

The bulk and loftiness of it are majestic, but its classic details in a Gothic framework have a curious effect on the beholder. They seem, those unhallowed pagan alcoves, mounting stage by stage toward the skies, like some blasphemous insinuation. The nave and transepts, rebuilt at the same time, are, oddly enough, not nearly so offensive, and it is rather a handsome as well as imposing interior that meets the stranger's gaze. It may be that it seems so much better because, warned by the outside, one expects so much worse. That familiar ornament in classic architecture, the "egg and dart," is an incongruous detail when worked into the capitals of columns in which the Gothic feeling predominates, and it sounds quite shocking when described; but here it comes with a pleasing, if scarcely ecclesiastical effect in this fine and well-proportioned interior.

The chancel of St. Mary's, together with the chapter-house on the north side of it and the Beauchamp Chapel on the south, escaped the fire, and remain uninjured to this day. It is possible to peer through the locked iron gates of the chancel from the nave, which is the only portion of the church that is to be seen without payment, but to see the chapter-house, and the Beau-

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THE BEAU-HAMP CHAPEL, WAVERLEY.

1880

ST. MARY'S

champ Chapel, to descend to the crypt and to mount the tower, you must pay and pay and pay again. The clergy in all the wide radius of the Shakespeare Country have the keenest scent for sixpences, and would make excellent business men. Better business men than clergymen, for all I know. They have long since learnt to charge and to keep their doors locked until their charges are satisfied; and none understand the business better than those who have the keeping of St. Mary's at Warwick. But when you have paid for this and for that and for t'other, and are resting and reading, and possibly making notes in the nave, it is gross, I say, and offensive and blackguardly to be followed up and spied upon and to be asked if you are sk tehing! "Because if you are it will be half-a-crown." I will now leave this unsavoury subject, wishing the clergy and churchwardens of St. Mary's more enlightenment and the people they employ better discretion.

The chancel, or choir, founded by Thomas Beauchamp, twelfth Earl of Warwick, who died 1369, is a stately Perpendicular work, with the altar-tomb of the founder and his wife Katharine, who died the same year, in the middle. His armoured effigy, with crosses crosslet displayed on the breastplate, rests its feet upon a bear, and at the feet of his wife is a lamb. He holds his wife's hand.

Around the tomb, in niches, are small figures representing members of the family, thirty-six in all. In a grave near by, unmarked by any monument or inscription, lies William Parr, brother of Katharine Parr, last and surviving wife of Henry the Eighth. He was created Marquis of Northampton, and died in 1571, sunk to such poverty that no money was forthcoming to bury him. A few years later, Queen Elizabeth found

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

a trifle, and he was decently interred, but no one ever thought it worth while to mark his resting-place.

Passing the greatly-enriched Easter Sepulchre in the north wall, the Chapter House is entered by a corridor. In the centre of this building stands the enormous monument to Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, who was murdered by his man-servant in 1628. "Delaying to reward one Hayward, an antient servant that had spent the most of his time in attendance upon him," says Dugdale, "he received a mortall stab in the back by the same man, then private with him in his bed-chamber at Brooke House in London, 30th Sept. ann. 1628, who, to consummate the tragedy, went into another room, and, having lockit the dore, pierced his own bowells with a sword."

The crypt is the oldest part of St. Mary's, with Norman pillars. It contains the old ducking-stool for scolding women.

The entrance to that most gorgeous relic of old St. Mary's, the Beauchamp Chapel, which is the principal item in the list of these ecclesiastical showmen, is on the east side of the south transept. The mortuary magnificence of the Beauchamps obscures the dedication of the Chapel to Our Lady, and the generations that have passed since the building of it between the years 1443 and 1464, and its final consecration in 1475, have rightly agreed to style it by the name by which it now, and always has been, popularly known. It reminds one very keenly of the insincere modern cant phrase which forms the dedication of memorial stained-glass windows. "To the Glory of God and to the memory of —," a shabby sop to the Almighty at which the soul revolts. The very entrance is obviously proprietary, and shows us that this is really the Beauchamp mausoleum. It is a magnificent entrance, a very highly-enriched work in

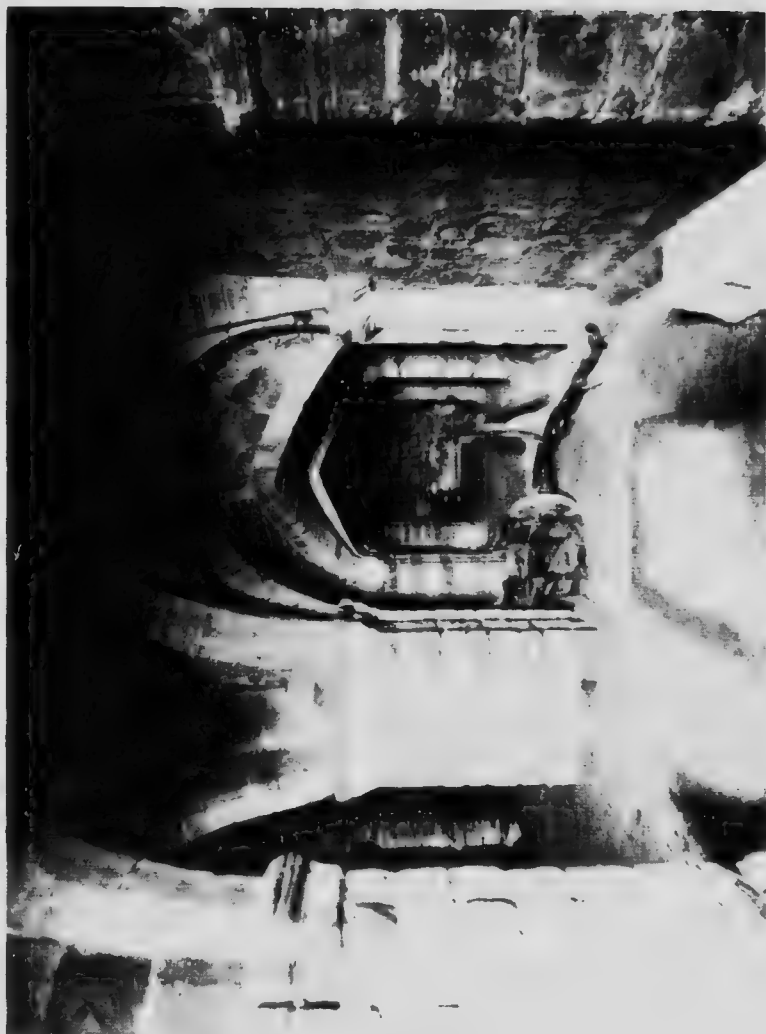
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THE CRAFT OF ST. MARY'S, WARREN.

(Continued)

THE BEAUCHAMP CHAPEL

panelled and sculptured stone, with the Warwick Bear and Ragged Staff on either side, facing the Beauchamp shield of crosses crosslet. Near it, on the wall, and green with neglect, is the fine brass to Thomas Beauchamp, thirteenth Earl of Warwick, who died in 1401, and of his wife Margaret, who died 1406. It seems strange that out of all the money contributed by visitors, and chiefly on account of the Beauchamp monuments, there cannot be some small surplus set aside for a restoration of the altar-tomb on which these figures were placed up to that time when the great fire destroyed it and much of the church. It is not well that so fine an example should remain on a wall; the most unsuitable position for a monumental brass. The Earl, who is given the old original name of the Norman Beauchamps who came over with the Conqueror—"Bellocampo," meaning "fair field"—is in complete armour, which has, besides the crosses crosslet of the family arms, a decorative border of ragged staves around his helmet. The Countess is habited in an heraldic mantle of crosses crosslet.

This Thomas Beauchamp was not so great or distinguished a man as his son, in whose honour the Beauchamp Chapel was erected.

The Beauchamp Chapel is slightly below the level of the south transept and is entered down a flight of steps. Photographs give an exaggerated idea of its size, but scarcely do justice to its beauty and the extreme richness of its details, still remarkable although the ancient coloured glass has been mostly destroyed and the golden images of the altar have disappeared. It is indeed due to the second Lord Brooke, who although a partisan of the Cromwellian side during the Civil War, was naturally keen to preserve the glories of Warwick, that the Chapel was not wholly destroyed in that age of tumults. Lord Brooke was the son of that Sir Fulke

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

Greville, first Baron Brooke, to whom James the First had granted Warwick Castle in 1605, and he no doubt looked upon the Beauchamps as ancestors, although there was never the remotest connection between that ancient martial family and his own, the Grevels, or Grevilles, who descend from the old wool-merchants of the name at Chipping Campden and elsewhere in the Cotswolds. He adopted them, and took them over, so to speak, with the Castle; and a good thing too, for these old monuments, that they had so fortunate an adoption.

The building is in the middle period of the Perpendicular style, that last manifestation of the Gothic spirit and the feudal ages, and is elaborately groined in stone. The great Richard Beauchamp, who lies here in these gorgeous surroundings, directed by will the building of the Chapel and the erection of his monument. He was the greatest as yet of his name, and appears to have been perfectly conscious of it, if we may judge by the state in which he ordained to lie. He was also to prove the greatest to all time, for although his son Henry who succeeded him at his death in 1439 was created Duke of Warwick, his career was undistinguished and soon ended, for he died in 1445. With him ended the long line of his race.

Richard Beauchamp, fourteenth Earl of Warwick, whose effigy lies here in lonely magnificence on the altar-tomb he directed to be made, as though he were too great a personage to have his wife beside him, was holder of the greatest offices of State of his period. The long inscription round his tomb tells us of some of these responsible posts—

“Preieth devoutly for the Sowel whom god assoille of one of the moost worshipful Knights in his dayes of monhode and conning Richard Beauchamp, late Earl

THE GREAT BEAUCHAMP

of Warrewik, lord Dispenser of Bergevenny and of mony other grete lordships whos body resteth here vnder this tumbre in a fulfeire vout of stone set on the bare rooch the which visited with longe siknes in the Castel of Roan therinne decessed ful cristenly the last day of April the yer of oure lord god A mccccxxix, he being at that tyme Lieutenant gen'al and governer of the Roialme of ffraunce and of the Duchie of Normandie by sufficient Auctorite of oure Sou'aigne lord the King Harry the vi., the which body with grete deliberacon' and ful worshipful conduit Bi See And by lond was broght to Warrewik the iiii day of Ootober the yer abouseide and was leide with ful solemn exequies in a feir chest made of stone in this Chirche afore the west dore of this Chapel according to his last wille and Testament therin to rest til this Chapel by him devised i' his liff were made Al the whuche Chapel founded on the Rooch And alle the membres thereof his Executours dede fully make and Apparaille By the Auctorite of his Seide last Wille and Testament And thereafter By the same Auctorite Theydide Translate fful worshipfully the seide Body into the vout abouseide, Honured be god therfore."

History comes in few places with such vivid reality to the modern person as it does here. Unmoved, because too often without the mental agility to perceive the significance of it, we look upon the old royal arms of England as they were for centuries, until the time of George the Thir', and see the quartering of the Lions of England with the Lilies of France; that proud boast, an idle pretension long before Calais, the final French possession of England, was lost, in the reign of Queen Mary. But standing before the tomb of the great Beauchamp, and reading his sounding titles, no mere ornamental designations, but the veritable responsible offices of State, as "Lieutenant-General and Governor

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

of the Realm of France and the Duchy of Normandy," we live again in tremendous days. No tomb of King or Emperor impresses me as does that of this puissant representative and viceroy of such sovereignty.

Beneath a hooped frame or "hearse" of gilded brass which formed the support for a gorgeous pall of crimson velvet lies the effigy of this great soldier and statesman, also in brass, once highly gilt. His bared head rests upon his helmet and his feet upon a griffin and a muzzled bear, and the Garter is on his left leg. The arms are raised in the usual attitude of prayer, but the hands themselves are not joined, as usual. They are, instead, represented apart, in the priestly pose during the celebration of mass.

The rich crimson velvet pall that covered the effigy and was lifted for its inspection by every visitor, was at last removed, on the plea of the injury it was supposed to be causing the figure, and has now unaccountably disappeared.

In niches around the altar-tomb are little figures representing his family, and sons- and daughters-in-law: fourteen in all; such great names as Henry Beauchamp, his son and successor, with his wife Cicely; Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury and his wife Alice; Richard Neville, afterwards Earl of Warwick and his wife Anne; Edmund Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, and his wife Eleanor; Humphrey Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, and his wife Anne; John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, and his wife Margaret; and George Neville, Lord Latimer, with his wife Elizabeth.

Against the north wall of the Chapel is the costly and ostentatious monument of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, rising in lofty stages of coloured marbles; a vulgar piece of work. The effigies of Dudley and his wife Lætitia, who survived him forty-six years and

THE LAST OF THE DUDLEYS

died in 1634, are gorgeously robed and painted in life-like fashion. The mantle of the Order of the Garter covers his armour, and the Garter itself is shown on his leg. It is with surpassing interest that one looks upon the chief of these figures; that Dudley who came near being King-Consort of Elizabeth, and died in 1588, at the comparatively early age of fifty-four; the vain and magnificent creature suspected of the murder of his first wife and traditionally poisoned by his last, who is said to have given him the lethal cup he had intended for herself. A long Latin epitaph sonorously recounts his many titles and honours, with the hardy belief in "a certain hope of his resurrection in Christ."

Against the opposite wall is the altar-tomb of that "noble Impe, Robert of Dudley," infant son of the last, who died in his fourth year, 1584. A circlet round the brow of the little figure bears the Leicester badge, the cinquefoil. Last of the Dudley monuments is the altar-tomb of Ambrose, styled the "good Earl," in tacit contradistinction from his brother Robert, the wicked one. The good Ambrose was not given length of days, for he died the year after his brother. He also is shown in armour and wears a coronet and the Garter. How he was given the post of "Mayster of the Ordinaunce," made Chief Butler of England, and was altogether a personage of many offices, his epitaph tells. With him and the "noble Impe," his brother's infant son, the legitimate race of the Dudleys died.

CHAPTER XXV

Warwick Castle.

THE great Castle of Warwick, now the seat of the Earl and Countess of Warwick, who formed themselves into a Limited Liability Company some fifteen years ago, under the title of the "Warwick Estates Co., Ltd.," has been the seat of the Grevilles since 1605.

The origin of Warwick Castle goes back to Ethelfleda, daughter of Alfred the Great and wife of the then Earl of Mercia, a strenuous and warlike lady, to whom are attributed many ancient works. She is credited with building the first fortress in A.D. 915, on that knoll still known as "Ethelfleda's Mount," on which a Norman keep was subsequently erected, perhaps by that famous personage Turchil. In the family of Turchil the cognisance of the yet more famous Bear and Ragged Staff originated, which in all succeeding generations has descended from house to house of the distinguished families who have come into possession of Warwick Castle: the Houses of Beauchamp, Neville, Dudley, Rich, and Greville: not as their personal badge, but as that of the castellan for the time being of Warwick. A fantastic theory has been set afoot that, as Siward, son of Turchil, assumed the name "de Arden," thus founding the numerous knightly family of Ardens, Shakespeare, as the son of a Mary Arden, was probably the rightful owner of Warwick Castle! We may safely say that this never occurred to Shakespeare himself, and may add him to one of that numerous class slyly alluded to

GUY OF WARWICK

by Ingoldsby; people "kept out of their property by the rightful owners."

The great Guy of Warwick, a giant in stature and doughty in deeds, is a myth, but that does not prevent his armour being shown in the Great Hall of the Castle. His period seems to be placed between that of Ethelfleda and Turchil, for the date of his death is put at A.D. 929. Mythical though he is, the later and very real flesh-and-blood Beauchamps, who came into possession of Warwick in the thirteenth century, were often named "Guy" in allusion to him. His armour, like his legendary self, is a weird accretion of time, and is no longer displayed with the touching belief of less exacting times. The Age of Belief is dead, they say. Of belief in some things incredible, no doubt. He wore, according to the articles seen here, not only armour of tremendous size and weight, but of periods ranging from three hundred, to six hundred and ninety years after his death. A bascinet of the time of Edward the Third covered his head, his breastplate, weighing fifty pounds, is of the latter part of the fifteenth century, and the backplate belongs to the Stuart period. His shield weighs thirty pounds; his great ponderous sword, five feet six inches long, is of the time of Henry the Eighth. "Guy's breakfast cup, or porridge-pot" is equally wonderful, for it has a capacity of a hundred and twenty gallons. It is really an ancient iron cauldron, once used for cooking the rations of the garrison.

The first historical Earl of Warwick was Henry de Newburgh, who died 1123; and by a succession of changes and failures of heirs the title and estates came to William de Beauchamp, husband of the daughter of William Mauduit.

In the time of Guy, Earl of Warwick, son of this William, the Castle witnessed some stirring scenes.

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

The discontented nobles, troubled at the preference given by Edward the Second to his foreign favourite, Piers Gaveston, and at the apparent impossibility of permanently ridding the kingdom of him, seized that pestilent foreigner and confined him for a short time in a dungeon here.

The favourite was by no means an acceptable person to the English barons, who although all directly descended from William the Conqueror's Frenchmen, had already been assimilated by this wonderful country of ours, and were as English as —well, let us say as English as any German Jew Golds'cin or Schlesinger of modern times who, coming to these happy shores, suffers a sea-change into something rich and rare, and becomes a new and strange "Gordon," or "Sinclair." They regarded this flippant Gascon from the south of France as an undesirable of the worst type, and could not and would not appreciate his jokes; a natural enough disability when you come to consider them, for they were all at their expense. If you study the monumental effigies of those mediæval barons and knights which are so plentifully dispersed throughout our country churches, you will readily perceive that although they were frequently very magnificent personages, their countenances do not often show any trace of intellectual qualities. Edward the Second was as flippant a person as his favourite, and when these stupid and indignant barons saw them laughing together, they knew very well, or keenly suspected, that they themselves were being laughed at. Did not this Gaveston fellow call the Earl of Lancaster "the play-actor," or "the fiddler," and the Earl of Lincoln "burst belly." Every one knew he called his father-in-law "*fils à puteyne*," or "whoreson." Guy, Earl of Warwick, was "the black hound of Arden."

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THE 'BLACK DOG OF ARDEN'

"Let him call me hound: one day the hound will bite him," said the Earl. Meanwhile, Gaveston went on finding nicknames for every one, and made himself bitterly hated by those dull-minded barons who could not joke back at him. The worst of it was, his lance was as keen, and went as straight to the point, as his gibes. It was little use meeting him in single combat, for he unhorsed and vanquished the best.

Hence this seizure of the hateful person. The story of it is told by Adam Murimuth—

"The King wished Peter de Gavestone to be conveyed to him by Lord Adamar de Valense, Earl of Pembroke, for safety; and, when they were at Danyn-ton next Bannebury, the same Earl sent him away in the night; and he went near to one place for this reason. And on the morrow in the morning came Guy, Earl of Warwyk, with a low-born and shouting band, and awakened Peter and brought him to his Castle of Warwyk and, after deliberation with certain elders of the kingdom, and chiefly with Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, finally released him from prison to go where he would. And when he had set out from the town of Warwyk even to the place called, somewhat prophetically, Gaveressich, he came there with many men making a clamor against him with their voices and horns, as against an enemy of the King and a lawful outlaw of the Kingdom, or an exile; and finally beheaded him as such xix day of the month of June."

So the "Black Dog" did indeed bite him to some effect. This tragic spot, is a place called Blacklow Hill, one mile north of the town. A monument to this misguided humorist, following his natural propensities in a land where humour is not appreciated, was erected on the spot by a Mr. Greathead, of Guy's Cliff House, in 1821. The inscription itself has a complete lack of humour—

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

"In the hollow of this rock was beheaded, on the first day of July, 1312, by barons as lawless as himself, Piers Gaveston, Earl of Cornwall, the minion of a hateful king, in life and death a memorable instance of misrule."

With this fierce "Black Dog of Arden," whose teeth were so sharp, the architectural history of the Castle becomes clear. He repaired and strengthened it, after the rough handling it had received in the Barons' War, in the reign of Henry the Third; but to Thomas de Beauchamp, his grandson, is due Cæsar's Tower, about 1360, and it was his son Thomas, who built Guy's Tower, named after the mythical giant, about 1394.

It costs two shillings to see Warwick Castle. I believe if you happen to be a resident of Warwick or Leamington, there is a reduction of fifty per cent. The entrance is not so old as it looks, and was cut through the rock in 1800. It leads to the gloomy Barbican, whose overhanging walls give a truly mediæval approach and form the completest contrast with the scene that opens beyond.

The visitor enters a huge courtyard, now one vast lawn, nearly two acres in area; with the residential portion of the Castle and its state-rooms on the left. Ahead is Ethelfleda's Mount, and on the right, guarding the curtain-wall at intervals, are Guy's Tower; the incomplete Bear Tower, with its mysterious tunnel, the work of Richard the Third; and the companion Clarence Tower, built by George, Duke of Clarence, his ill-fated brother, murdered in the Tower of London. Beside Ethelfleda's Mount is the Hill Tower.

Immediately to the left of the entrance are the brew-house, laundry and then Cæsar's Tower, with its gloomy dungeon, a most undesirable place of residence with vaulted stone roof and mouldy smells, meet for repentance and vain regrets. Here the "Black Dog"

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PRISONERS' INSCRIPTIONS

imprisoned the flippant Gaveston, and many later generations of prisoners passed weary times, scratching their not very legible records upon the walls for lack of employment. Among them is the record of one "Master John Smyth, gunner to the King," who appears to have been a prisoner here for the worse part of four years, in the hands of the Cromwellian partisan, Lord Brooke. We learn nothing further of the unfortunate gunner, nor why he was meted such hard measure.

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Mr. William Sidiatē (or possibly it is "Lidiatē") who thus, in the quaintest of lettering inscribed the sorrows of his friend the imprisoned gunner, appears to have been fully conscious of the eccentricity of his handiwork, but the inferiority of his "pen"—which was probably a rusty nail—can have had nothing to do with his weird admixture of "large caps," "upper case," "lower case" and italic type which I confidently expect will make the compositor of this page smile and sigh by turns.

The Great Hall, with its armour and pictures and relics of Guy, is of course the chief feature of the long

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

round of sight-seeing that makes Warwick Castle second to none as a show-place. It was greatly injured in the fire of December 1871, when many priceless relics were destroyed. Facsimile replicas of some have been made, and of the ancient armour which survived it has been said that there is no finer in the Kingdom, except that in the Tower of London. It is remarkable that although the Castle has passed from family to family, and sometimes to families not related to their predecessors, the continuity of things has been maintained. Here is the mace of Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, "the King-maker," who was slain in 1471 at the Battle of Barnet; here are portions of the armour which belonged to Prince Edward, murdered at Tewkesbury, after the battle together with relics of the Dudleys, such as the miniature suit of armour made for the "noble Impe"; together with a helmet of the great Oliver Cromwell, and the suit worn by Lord Brooke, shot at the siege of Lichfield. His buff leathern jerkin was burnt in 1871, and that we now see is a facsimile of it. Here, too, are those preposterous relics of Guy, already mentioned together with a rib of that Dun Cow of terrific story, which he slew upon Dunsmore. The visitor will see that rib with surprise, and note that the cows of a thousand years ago were larger than ever he suspected. It is the rib of a whale.

He would be a courtly, and perhaps also a tedious writer who should essay to fully describe Warwick Castle with its many suites of state-rooms, its gothic stone vaulted servants'-hall, and its terraces, ponds, and gardens, together with the conservatories and that famous Roman antiquity, the so-called "Warwick Vase," found at Hadrian's Villa, near Rome in 1770, and purchased by the dilettante George, second Earl, from Sir William Hamilton. Great improvements have been

CÆSAR'S TOWER

made here in the last few years, at the cost of "a little damming and blasting," as was remarked at the time.

Past the melancholy flymen who linger in the broad roadway opposite the entrance to the Castle, and wear jaundiced looks as though it were years ago since they had had a fare and expect it to be years yet before they will get another, you turn to the right into Mill Lane, narrow street of ancient houses, leading down to the river and to the site of that ancient mill where the feudal lords had their corn ground.

The magnificence of state-rooms, the lengthy parade of family portraits, the beauty of the gardens, and the trimness of well-kept lawns do not serve the really cultivated visitor's turn in Warwick Castle. He pays his two shillings and is herded through with many others, a little browbeaten by the stale declamation of the gorgeous lackeys and by a very indigestion of sight-seeing. It is not a mediæval fortress he has seen, but a private residence. In Mill Lane, however, you come into nearer touch with realities. Here, in this by far the most picturesque and unspoiled part of Warwick, where the bowed and time-worn brick or timber-framed houses are living out their life naturally, something of the ancient contrast between subservient town and feudal fortress may be gathered, softened down, it is true, by the hand of time. Cæsar's Tower is viewed at its best from the lower end of the lane, and looks from this point of view the noblest and the sternest tower the forceful military architects of the Middle Ages have given us, and well worthy of the great name of Cæsar long ago conferred upon it by some unknown admirer of its dignity and massive beauty. It was somewhere about 1360 when Cæsar's Tower first arose upon the rocky bluff in which its foundations go deeply down. It was then called the

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

Poitiers Tower. The purpose of this extremely strong and cunningly-planned work just here is lost to the modern casual observer, but if a keen glance is directed to the Avon flowing so closely by, it will be observed that although Mill Lane is now a lane butting up against the river bank and leading nowhere, the ruins of a very substantial stone bridge that once crossed the broad stream at this point are seen. This formerly carried the high road from Warwick to Banbury, and when still in use brought the possibility of attack upon the Castle at this angle very near, and therefore to be provided against by the strongest possible defence. Hence those boldest of machicolations overhead, those arrow-slits in the skilfully-planned battlements above them, and that extraordinary double base with the bold slopes, seen in the accompanying illustration; a base whose purpose was to fling off with a tremendous rebound into the midst of an enemy the stones, the molten lead and pitch, and the more nasty, but not so lethal missiles with which a besieged garrison defended themselves. This base is quite solid rock, faced with masonry. In the upper part of it is seen the small barred window that admits a feeble light into the dungeon already described. To-day the elms have grown up to great heights beside Cæsar's Tower and assuage the grimness of it, and the only sounds are the cawings and gobbling noises of the rooks in their branches, or the unlovely cries of the Castle peacocks which strut across the lane in all their glory of colour.

The tower rises 106 feet above its rocky basement. Those old military architects who designed and built it had not the least idea they were installing a picturesque feature. They had no knowledge at all of the picturesque; but they assured themselves, as well as they could, that the safety of the Castle should be provided for.

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CÆSAR'S TOWER, WARWICK CASTLE.

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

And they did it so well that history will be studied in vain for a successful siege.

This must have been a noble and imposing entrance to Warwick town in days of old. Then the road from London to Banbury crossed the ancient bridge and came up under this frowning tower and through the south gate of the town, along Mill Lane.

The bridge, originally a narrow packhorse bridge of thirteen arches and of great antiquity, was widened in 1375 and the number of arches reduced to seven; and, thus remodelled, carried the traffic until 1790. This way came of necessity every traveller from London to Warwick, and in this manner Queen Elizabeth entered the town and Castle in 1572.

Warwick Castle was in those times less secluded from the streets than it now is. The feudal owners of it were not at all concerned to hide themselves away, but when the age of sight-seeing dawned and amateurs of the picturesque began to tour the country, they began to consider how they could ensure a complete privacy. It was effected by diverting the public highway. This was done at the instigation of George, second of the Greville Earls of Warwick, in or about 1790, when the new road and bridge were made, crossing the Avon considerably to the eastward. From that modern bridge, which cost £4000, only in part contributed by the Earl, who benefited most by the diversion, is obtained that view of the Castle so extravagantly praised by Sir Walter Scott. It is the only possible view, and not a good one: one by no means to be compared with that formerly obtained from the old bridge. Sir Walter Scott therefore either did not know what he was talking about, or was too much of a courtier to reveal his own convictions.

At this same time when the road was made to take its new course, the meadows on the other side of the

THE GREVILLES

Avon were enclosed and thrown into the park. To complete and fully round off this story of obliterating ancient landmarks, the old bridge was wrecked in the same year by a flood. Three only of its arches remain.

The Grevilles, the present Earls of Warwick, have a motto to their coat of arms which is a complete change from the usual swashbuckling braggart sentiments. He was surely a singularly modest man who first adopted it. I wish I could identify him. He must have read well the history of Warwick Castle and have pondered on the successive families of cuckoos who have nested in the old home of the original owners. He selected a quotation from the *Metamorphoses* of that amorous dove, P. Ovidius Naso—O ! quite a proper one, I assure you—*Vix ea nostra voco*, "I can scarce call these things our own." Whether he meant the heirlooms, the mace that belonged to the great Richard Neville "the King-maker," the Plantagenet and the Dudley relics, or if he were a contemplative philosopher ruminating on the Law of Entail, by which he was not owner, to do with as he would, but only tenant-for-life, who shall say ?

CHAPTER XXVI

Guy's Cliff—The legend of Guy—Kenilworth and its watersplash—Kenilworth Castle.

LEAMINGTON will scarcely interest the holiday-maker in Shakespeare land. From Warwick to Kenilworth is the more natural transition, and it is one of much interest. A mile and a half out of the town is that famous place of popular legend, Guy's Cliff, where the great mansion, standing beside the river and built in 1822, looks so ancient, and where, on the opposite shore of Avon, stands that mill whose highly picturesque features are a standing dish in railway carriage picture-galleries. The impossible armour of the mythical Guy of Warwick we have already seen in Warwick Castle, and the improbable legend of his hermit life in the riverside cave remains now to be told.

Guy, returning from the Holy Land and successfully engaging as the champion of England against Colbrond, the giant Dane, in combat at Winchester, retraced his steps towards Warwick. There, unknown by any, he three days appeared among the poor at the Castle gate, as one of the thirteen people to whom his wife daily gave alms; and "having rendered thanks to her, he repaired to an Heremite that resided among the shady woods hard by." The legend forgets to tell us why he did this, and does not explain how it was that this giant fellow, who apparently was eight feet high, was not recognised by his wife and others. Were they all eight feet tall, or thereabouts, at Warwick in those times?

THE MYTHICAL GUY

But it would be wasting time to apply the test of intelligent criticism to this mass of accumulated legends, to which many generations have added something. Guy is a mythical hero, built upon the exploits of some early British champion, whose name and real history are as past recall as the facts about King Arthur. But the great fourteenth-century Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, who founded the chapel here, seems to have believed in him and in the size of him, for Guy's mutilated effigy placed here by that great earl, whose faith must have been as robust as his body, is the full eight feet long.

At any rate, here is the cave of the hermit he consulted with, and with whom he resided, unknown still to his friends, until that holy and rheumatic man died. Here he himself died, two years later, A.D. 929, aged seventy. Thus the story seeks to bolster up the wild character of its details by the specious exactness of its dates. "He sent to his Lady their Wedding Ring by a trusty servant, wishing her to take care of his burial; adding also that when she came, she should find him lying dead in the Chapel, before the altar, and moreover, that within xv days after, she herself should depart this life."

Guy's Cave, excavated in the rock, appears really to have been a hermit's abode in Saxon times. His name seems, from the early twelfth-century Saxon inscription found here over a hundred years ago, to have been "Guhthi." It runs "Yd Crist-tu ienietti this i-wihtth. Guhthi"; which has been rendered, "Cast out, thou Christ, from Thy servant this burden, Guhthi." So romance is not altogether unjustified, and although this misguided anchorite did not appreciate scenery, we at any rate can thus find some historical excuse as well as a scenic one for visiting the spot, with the crowd.

It is a pleasant road, on through Leek Wootton,

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

where the church, after being rebuilt in an odious style in 1792, has been brought more into keeping with later ecclesiastical sentiment. And so the road runs on, to Kenilworth, through the approach called Castle End. Presently, after threading the long street, there in its meadows rises the ruined Castle.

There is no ideal way into Kenilworth nowadays, because the place has become more or less of a town, and numerous Coventry business men make it their suburban home. Thus does Romance disappear, in the daily goings forth and the returnings on their lawful occasions of the residents, and in the spreading of fresh streets and always more cheaply built houses for newer colonies of them. The first jerry-builder at Kenilworth was Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, whose badly bonded additions to the Castle still ruinously show how slightly and hastily he set about the work. But of that anon.

Castle End is one of those scattered portions of the town that surprise the stranger. He thinks, time and again, that he has seen all Kenilworth, but there is always some more of it. You bear to the left and descend to a broad watersplash that crosses the road beneath densely overarching trees. The people of Kenilworth cling tightly to the preservation of their watersplash, and for several reasons : it is highly picturesque and keeps them in touch with the last elfin echoes of that Romance I have spoken of; the building of a bridge would cost them considerably; and finally they would lose the amusement and speculative interest which has latterly been added to it in these automobile times, when a motor-car may or may not succeed in getting through. For the watersplash is rather a sudden apparition to the motorist strange to the place, and it is a very variable thing. Sometimes it will be a shallow trickle across the road, and at others, when rain has fallen, it will be broad and

KENILWORTH CASTLE

deep. This is when the people of Kenilworth love to gather on the narrow footbridge at the side and smoke a quiet cigarette, waiting for the coming of the motorist who will presently be in difficulties. It is something of a problem how to pass at such times. If you rush it, as most are tempted to do, you get through at the cost of being swamped with the tremendous spray thrown up; and if you go gently you are probably brought to an inglorious standstill in mid-stream, with the ignominious necessity of wading out and procuring assistance. In any event, an engrossing spectacle is provided.

Once through this ford, you come up to the Castle entrance, on the left. It is a pleasant old part that looks on to the scene of so much feudal state and bygone warlike doings. A group of old red brick and timber cottages, their red brick of the loveliest geranium redness, looks upon a kind of village green. They lean at all kinds of angles, their roofs have skylines like the waves of a troubled sea, in front of each one is a little forecourt garden, and they all supply teas and sell picture-postcards. I do not know what the inhabitants of them do in the winter. Perhaps they come up to London and spend their gains in mad revelry.

It is a hungry and a thirsty business, "doing" Kenilworth Castle conscientiously, and the people of Castle Green and elsewhere in this village-town find their account therein. Even those visitors who do not conscientiously "do" it—and they are by far the larger number, both because most have not the intellectual equipment necessary, and because in the rest the weakness of the flesh prevails over the willingness of the spirit—find copious refreshment necessary. There is in fact, a great deal to be seen, and the interest is sustained throughout. Viewed in a commercial way, it is a very good sixpennyworth. Personally, I consider

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

Ludlow Castle to be somewhat the superior of Kenilworth, and to hold the premier position for a ruined castle; but Kenilworth is first in the estimation of many. It does not make the effective picture that Ludlow forms, crowning its rocky bluff above the river Teme for Kenilworth stands in perhaps the weakest situation that ever was selected for an ancient fortress, its ruined walls rising from low-lying meadows, and at a distance having the appearance rather of some huge dismantled mansion than a castle.

It is quite easy to deduce the existence of some Saxon lord, Chenil or Kenelm, whose *weorth* this was, but he is not an historical personage. The first important historical fact that remains to us is the gift of the manor by Henry the First to Geoffrey de Clinton in 1122, but what he found here in the nature of a castle, or what he may have built is alike unknown. From the grandson of this Geoffrey, King John appears to have taken a lease and to have added many outworks to the then existing castle keep, which still remains. That evil figure in English history, travelling almost incessantly about his kingdom, watchful and tyrannical, seems to have been much at Kenilworth, enlarging the bounds of the Castle beyond the original Saxon mound on which the keep and the inner ward are placed, inventing strong dungeons for his victims, and constructing those outer walls which still look out, beyond the original moat. Thus the Castle grew to four times the area it had at first occupied, and as it could not be strengthened by steep approaches, it was safeguarded by artificially constructed water defences. The fortification of Kenilworth Castle was indeed a wonderful triumph of mediæval military engineering over the disabilities of an unsatisfactory site, and it enabled the disaffected nobles and others in the next reign to sustain a six months' siege ending only in

SIEGE OF KENILWORTH

their surrender through a plague which had broken out among the garrison.

We can still see the nature of these defences, for although the water has been drained away, the circuit of the outer walls, from the Swan Tower on Clinton Green, round to Mortimer's Tower, the Water Tower, and Lunn's Tower remains perfect, and marks where the defences on two sides of the Castle enclosure skirted a great lake formed by damming back two small confluent brooks in the hollow meadows in which the Castle stands. The outer walls, now looking upon pastures where cattle graze, then descended sheer into the water; a flight of steps leading down from a postern gate still remaining to show where a boat could then have been launched. This lake was half a mile long, from 90 to 100 yards broad, and from 10 to 12 feet deep.

The siege of 1266 tried the strength of this strong place. The great Simon de Montfort, who fell at the Battle of Evesham in 1265, had been granted the Castle in 1254. He died in the popular cause, fighting against Henry the Third, and his defeated army hurried to Kenilworth. They found no immediate opposition, and garrisoned the place at leisure, being joined there by many powerful adherents and heaping up enormous stores for a lengthy resistance. Both sides knew it would be a stubborn and difficult affair. The King tried at first to come to terms with the garrison, but he does not appear to have gone about it in the most tactful way. It is true that he was prepared to allow the rebels to compound for pardon with a fine, supposing they did so within forty days, but to "pardon" those who think they are in the right and who are still in arms to assert their rights and redress their grievances, seems an unlikely way to end a dispute. The Church was opposed to the popular side, as may always con-

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

fidently be expected, and helped the King's cause by damming the insurgents and preparing the tremendous document known to history as the "Dictum de Kenilworth," otherwise "the Ban." This was read and published in the church of St. Mary, Warwick. It proclaimed the supreme will of the King, and, *inter alia*, forbade the people to regard the dead hero and popular idol, de Montfort, as the saint and martyr they were already declaring him to be. The garrison received this with contempt, and the long siege began. Robert of Gloucester, who records it in eloquent but rugged lines, is too quaint and amusing not to be quoted —

"The king anon at midsummer, with strength and with gin
To Kenilworth y-went, the castle to win;
He swore he would not thence until he were within.
So long they sped badly that they might as well blin¹
None of their gates those within ever close would.
Open they stood, night and day, come in whoso would.
Out they smite well oft, when men too nigh came,
And slew fast on either half and prisoners name;²
And then bought they them back with ransom. Such life long did
last:
With mangonels and engines each upon the other cast.
The Legate and the Archbishop with them also nome;³
Two other bishops, and to Kenilworth come,
To make accord between the King and the disinherited also,
And them of the Castle, if it might be y-do⁴
But the disinherited would not do all after the King⁵
Nor they of the Castle any the more, nor stand to their liking,⁶
The Legate with his red cope amused⁷ tho⁸
Them that in the castle were, and full many mo⁹
All that helped them, or were of their rede,¹⁰
Or to them consented, in will or in deed.

¹ Draw closer.

² Took prisoners.

³ They took.

⁴ If it might be done.

⁵ They would not agree to the King's terms.

⁶ They would not abide by their wishes.

⁷ Then excommunicated them.

⁸ More.

¹⁰ Counsel.

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ROBERT DUDLEY

They of the Castle held it in great despite,
Copes and other clothes they let make them of white
And Master Philip Porpoise, that was a quaint man,
Clerk, and hardy in his deeds, and their chirurgian,
They made a mock Legate, in this cope of white,
Against the others' rede, to do the Legate a despite,
And he stood as Legate upon the Castle wall,
And amused King and Legate and their men all
Such game lasted long among them in such strife,
But much good was it not, to soul or to life."

There was never another siege of Kenilworth. It passed through many hands, and among others to John o' Gaunt, whose manors are found numerous, all over the country. In his time the great Banqueting Hall, the most beautiful feature of the Castle, was added, and it became not only a fortress, but a stately palace as well. But the most stately and gorgeous times were yet to be. Robert Dudley, Queen Elizabeth's favourite, who aspired to become King-Consort, received a grant of it in 1563, and was created Earl of Leicester the following year. The monopolies and rich offices of State showered upon him by the Queen had already made him an enormously wealthy man, and he determined to entertain his Sovereign here with unparalleled splendour. To this end he established an army of workmen here, who treated the place very much in the way adopted by any suddenly enriched millionaire of modern times towards the out-of-date mansion he has purchased. The narrow openings in the massive walls of the Norman keep were enlarged and great mullioned windows inserted; the vast Gatehouse still standing and now used as a private residence was built; and the lofty block of buildings added that still bears his name. Many other works, but of less spectacular nature, were undertaken at this time.

Dudley had known many changes of fortune, and had been a prisoner in the Tower only ten years earlier,

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

with his father and four brothers, on a charge of high treason; narrowly escaping execution. Now an astonishing freak of chance had made him perhaps the most powerful, as well as the wealthiest, man in the country. Sir Walter Scott's novel, *Kenilworth*, details Leicester's magnificence and the unparalleled grandeur of the entertainments given here to Queen Elizabeth in 1575, and introduces his wife Amy Robsart, Lady Robert Dudley, as Countess of Leicester into the scenes of his story. But in 1560, four years before he had received his earldom, his wife had perished mysteriously at Cumnor Place in Berkshire, murdered, it has been supposed, at his instigation, to clear the way for that projected marriage with Queen Elizabeth which never took place. Leicester, when he entertained the Queen here so royally, had no "encumbrances," to limit his ambitions.

How the Queen was received here and entertained for seventeen days is fully, and on the whole tediously, narrated by a remembrancer then present, but a short extract will tell us something of the quality of these revels. On her Majesty's approach she was met by a girl in character as "one of the ten sibills, cumly clad in a pall of white sylk," who recited a "proper poezie in English rime and meeter, the which her Majestie benignly accepted and passed foorth unto the next gate of the Brayz, which for the length, largenes, and use, they call now the Tylt-Yard; whear a porter, tall of person, and wrapt also in sylke, with a club and keiz of quantitee according, had a rough speech full of passions, in meeter aptly made to the purpose." Presently when the Queen came to the inner gate "a person representing the Lady of the Lake, famous in King Arthurz Book, with two Nymphes waiting uppon her, arrayed all in sylks, attended her highness comming," the Lady of the Lake then coming ashore from the

FESTIVITIES AT KENILWORTH

moat, and reciting a "well-penned meeter." After this, coming to the Castle gate, a Latin poem was read to her by a poet clad in a "long ceruleous Garment, with a Bay Garland on his head, and a skrol in his hand. So, passing into the inner court, her Majesty, (that never rides but alone) thear set down from her palfrey, was conveyed up to her chamber, when after did follo a great peal of Gunz and lightning by Fyr work."

£1000 a day was spent in the feasting and revelling. Everything was done without stint. The great clock on the keep was stopped. "The Clok Bell sang not a Note all the while her Highness waz thear: the Clok also stood still withall, the handz of both the tablz stood firm and fast, allweys pointing at two a Clok." The hospitable and symbolical meaning of this was that two o'clock was the banqueting hour.

Every time when the Queen went hunting in the park, classic deities, and heroes and heroines of mythology would appear from woodland glades and recite complimentary poems—greatly to the disadvantage of the sport, it may be supposed Bear-baiting further enlivened the time, and "nyne persons were cured of the peynful and daungerous deseaz called the King's Evill."

Kenilworth passed on the death of Leicester in 1588, to his brother, Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick, and on his decease, two years later, to Robert's illegitimate son, Sir Robert Dudley, who was long an exile, and died in 1649. It was let to Prince Henry, son of James the First, and on his death to his brother, Prince Charles, who purchased it from Sir Robert's deserted wife, whom he, when Charles the First, created Duchess Dudley, 1645. After the King's execution the property was granted by Cromwell to some of his supporters, to whom is due its ruinous condition, for they made the best market they could of its building-stone. On the

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

Restoration in 1660, Charles the Second granted it to the Earl of Clarendon, in whose descendants' hands it still remains.

The visitor to the Castle almost always makes at once for the keep and the imposing ruins of John o' Gaunt's great Banqueting Hall, rising boldly from the mound, partly natural and partly artificial, in the centre of the Castle precincts. He thus follows the natural instincts of sightseers, but the better way, for the full understanding of the scale and ancient strength of the works, is unquestionably to first make the inner circuit of the walls. Standing on Clinton Green before entering the Castle, and facing it from the only side not in ancient times defended by lakes or marshy ground, we are on the bank whence Henry the Third's soldiers chiefly conducted the siege of 1266. It was the weakest part of the works, because the high natural plateau entirely precluded the possibility of continuing the water defences on this side. All that could be done here by the military engineers of Kenilworth was to excavate the deep chasm which still remains; and across this the besiegers vainly tried to pass, with the aid of bundles of faggots thrown into the hollow, while "Master Philip Porpoise," who, as the chronicler truly says, "was a quaint man," stood on the walls, dressed up like the Pope's Legate, and cursed the King and the real Legate and all the King's men.

Leicester's great Gatehouse no longer forms the entrance to the Castle, and is in private occupation. It did not even figure in the great reception of Queen Elizabeth in 1575, for she came the other way, through the Tilt Yard and by Mortimer's Tower, and across the great Outer Ward: a method of approach especially calculated to enhance the stateliness of the pageant. All Warwickshire, I think, must have witnessed those

THE RUINS

doings, from the further bank of the widespreading lake, among them Mr. John Shakespeare and his eleven-year-old son, William, whose imagination would have been excited by the fantastic creatures that sported on the water, and by the fireworks and the heathen gods and goddesses: very real to him, because he was not old enough to know how it was all done.

You render your entrance-fee at a narrow gate and are at once free to wander at will. In front is the grassy Outer Ward, and on the right, the keep and the state buildings, with Leicester's Building, lofty, seamed with fissures and shored up against its falling. The eyeless windows preach a homily on the transient nature of things.

But, leaving these for a while, we skirt along to the left, coming to the ruins of Mortimer's Tower, which stood on the wall and formed the entrance to the Castle in this direction. It looked out upon the Tilt Yard and the massive dam that penned up the waters of the Great Lake. Just before this tower is reached the Water Tower on the wall will be seen, and may be examined. Near at hand are the Stables and Lunn's Tower, divided off by a light iron fence and not accessible; being included within the grounds belonging to the occupier of the Gatehouse. But the Stables are seen, clearly enough, and form the most charming colour-scheme within the Castle. They are of fifteenth-century red brick, timber-framed, and of an almost unimaginably delicate and yet vivid red.

Next after Mortimer's Tower comes a small postern gateway, with its steps formerly leading to the water. Continuing from it and following the wall, we come under the tottering walls of Leicester's building, on the right, with the massive walls of the state Buildings beyond it. They stand high, upon a mound that formed the limits

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

of the Castle of Saxon and early Norman days, and the grassy walk between them and the outer wall was in those distant times the moat, long before the magnificent scheme of the lake was thought out. Remains of fireplaces and windows in this outer wall show where the wooden buildings that formed barracks for the



KENILWORTH CASTLE : RUINS OF THE BANQUETING HALL.

garrison stood. The walk ends up against an archway leading into the garden, or Plaisance, assigned to Henry the Eighth, through which the outer wall continues past a water-gate called the "King's Gate," and so to the Swan Tower, where the circuit is completed, at Clinton Green.

But the Plaisance is not open to the public. The way into the central block of State buildings is through a postern doorway on the right, under the Banqueting

THE GREAT HALL

Hall. The savage treatment of these noble buildings by Cromwell's friends has at first sight obscured the nature of this scene; but it is soon perceived that the Hall stood high, upon a basement or undercroft, whose vaulted roof has entirely disappeared, together with that of the Hall itself. This postern doorway therefore led through the basement. The Hall was the work of John o' Gaunt, about 1350, and was a grand building in the Perpendicular style, ninety feet long and forty-five feet wide. Lofty and deeply-recessed windows, with rich tracery lighted it, and at one end was an exceptionally beautiful oriel window. A portion of this survives, together with two of the others. The entrance from the Inner Court was by a fine flight of stone stairs and through a wide archway still remaining in greatly weather-worn condition, but showing traces of delicately carved work. Inside is the groined porch, with a recess for a porter.

Sir Walter Scott, who here adopts the close account given by Laneham, one of the Queen's retinue during her reception at Kenilworth, and merely edits him, describes the appearance of the Hall, "hung with the richest tapestry, misty with perfumes, and sounding to strains of soft and delicious music. From the highly carved oaken roof hung a superb chandelier of gilt bronze, formed like a spread eagle, whose outstretched wings supported three male and three female figures, grasping a pair of branches in each hand. The Hall was thus illuminated by twenty-four torches of wax. At the upper end of this splendid apartment was a State canopy, overshadowing a royal throne, and beside it was a door which opened to a long suite of apartments, decorated with the utmost magnificence for the Queen and her ladies, when it should be her pleasure to be private."

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

This magnificence curiously contrasts with the primitive nature of the sanitary arrangements seen in the adjoining towers and in the keep. The Strong Tower and the Kitchen Tower fill up the space between the Banqueting Hall and the keep; the first named, appropriately enough, from having been a prison. The walls of its not unpleasant, though small rooms, still bear some rudely-scratched coats of arms of those who were detained here. Their imprisonment cannot have been so hopeless as that of King John's victims, in the dungeons of the keep.

The keep is called "Cæsar's Tower," but the Romans had never any association with Kenilworth. It would better be styled "Clinton's." Like all the buildings, it is of a dull, brownish red stone. An angle-turret shows where the clock was placed: that clock whose hands always stood hospitably at the banqueting hour in those seventeen days of Elizabethan revel.

Leaving Kenilworth for Coventry, the church is on the right. Its west doorway is a fine but much-decayed work of the Norman period, from the ruins of the Augustinian Priory close by. It is a much-restored church, and does not come up to the expectations raised by a sight of its octagonal tower and spire. The only object of interest within is a pig of lead built into the tower wall, bearing the mark of one of Henry the Eighth's travelling Commissioners inquiring into the suppression of the religious houses. It would seem to be one of a number cast from the lead off the Priory roofs.

Kenilworth at last left behind, a gradual rise brings the traveller to the turning to Stoneleigh village. It is "Gibbet Hill." The ill-omened name comes from an example of the law's ancient practice of hanging up murderers to the public view, very much in the manner of those gamekeepers who nail up the bodies of the

THE GIBBET

jays, the rats, the weasels and other "vermin." The criminals whose carcasses swung and rattled here in their chains were three in number; Moses Baker, a weaver of Coventry, and Edward Drury and Robert Leslie, two dragoons of Lord Pembroke's regiment, quartered in that city. They had on March 18th, 1765, murdered a farmer, one Thomas Edwards, at a place called Whoberley, just outside Coventry. Their bodies hung until their clothes rotted; and then, one by one, their bones fell from their chains and enclosing cages. But the gibbet and the terror of it remained until 1820, when the weathered timber, scored with thousands of the rusty nails which had been driven into it, so that no one should climb the post, was removed to do service in the cow byre of a neighbouring farm.

This melancholy history apart, the road is a pleasant one; broad, and lined with wide grassy edges and magnificent elms. It was even more pleasant before the motor manufacturing firms of Coventry began the practice of testing their new cars along it, and was then the pride of the district. It leads across Stivichall Common into the city of Coventry, over that railway bridge referred to by Tennyson in his poem, *Godiva*—

"I waited for the train at Coventry;
I hung with grooms and porters on the bridge,
To watch the three tall spires."

I remember a first reading of that poem, and the difficulty of really believing Tennyson meant a railway train. It seemed incredible that he could in such a nineteenth-century fashion introduce an eleventh-century subject. The "train" one imagined at first to be a train in the middle-ages sense, a procession or pageant, and the person who waited for it to be, not Tennyson himself, but some imaginary person indulging

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

in historical speculation. But no, he was modern, like his own King Arthur.

Here the "three tall spires" first come into view, and the city of Coventry is entered, past the Green and up Hertford Street.

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CHAPTER XXVII

Coventry.

COVENTRY originated, according to tradition, in a convent established here as early as the sixth century. Canute is said to have been the founder of another. Whatever may be the truth of the matter, it is certain that the great Saxon Earl Leofric and his wife Godifu in 1043 founded that Benedictine Monastery whose Priory church afterwards became the Cathedral, whose scanty ruins alone remain. These real and legendary religious houses, together with the Monastery of the Carmelites, or White Friars, and numerous others originated a curious notion that the name "Coventry" was really a corruption of "Conventry," the place of convents. It was an excusable mistake, when we consider that the somewhat similar name of "Covent Garden" in London does in point of fact derive from the old garden of the Abbots of Westminster, but it was a complete mistake, all the same. The name comes from a little stream called by the British the Couen, not easily to be found in the city itself, but rising to the north and passing through the village of Coundon. (There is a stream of similar name, the "Cound," at Church Stretton, in Shropshire.) It was thus the "place on the Couen." The Saxons, who called that stream by a name of their own, the "Scir-burn," that is to say, the "clear stream"—which in course of time became the "Sherborne"—did not

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

succeed in changing the name of the place, as they did at Sherborne in Dorset; and "Coventry" it remained.

The most famous incident in the ancient "history" of Coventry is entirely legendary; but although proved to be inherently improbable, if not impossible, the story of Godiva and her ride through the streets clad only in her own modesty, is one that will never be destroyed by criticism. It is too ancient a myth for that.

About the year 1130 the monkish writer, Roger of Wendover, started it. Whence he derived the story no one knows, but he probably heard it as a folk-legend unconnected with place or person, and took it upon himself to fix the tale on Leofric and his Countess Godifu. He had courage in doing so, for it was only about a hundred years after the time of Leofric and his wife that he wrote.

"The Countess Godiva," he says, "who was a great lover of God's mother, longing to free the town of Coventry from the oppression of a heavy toll, often with urgent prayers besought her husband, that from regard to Jesus Christ and His mother, he would free the town from that service, and from all other heavy burdens; and when the Earl sharply rebuked her for foolishly asking what was so much to his damage, and always forbade her forevermore to speak to him on the subject; and while she, on the other hand, with woman's pertinacity, never ceased to exasperate her husband on that matter, he at last made her this answer: 'Mount your horse, and ride naked before all the people, through the market of the town from one end to the other, and on your return you shall have your request,' on which Godiva replied, 'But will you give me permission, if I am willing to do it?' 'I will,' said he. Whereupon, the Countess, beloved of God, loosed her hair, and let down her tresses, which covered the whole of her body,

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PEEPING TOM

like a veil, and then mounting her horse and attended by two knights, she rode through the market-place without being seen, except her fair legs; and having completed the journey, she returned with gladness to her astonished husband and obtained of him what she had asked, for Earl Leofric freed the town of Coventry and its inhabitants from the aforesaid service, and confirmed what he had done by a charter."

The incident of Peeping Tom was never thought of by Roger of Wendover, and does not become a part of the story until the seventeenth century. Who was the genius who invented him is not known; but from that time onwards the peeping tailor who alone of all the people of Coventry spied upon Godiva as she rode through the empty streets becomes an essential part of the legend. His fate takes so mediæval a turn that he seems really older than he is. Tennyson adopts him, in his poem, as a

"low churl, compact of thankless earth,
The fatal byword of all years to come,
Boring a little auger-hole in fear,
Peep'd—but his eyes, before they had their will,
Were shrivell'd into darkness in his head,
And dropt before him. So the powers who wait
On noble deeds, cancell'd a sense misus'd."

A half-length effigy reporting to be Peeping Tom occupies a niche in the wall of the "King's Head" in Smithford Street. He is really a portion of a figure of St. George from one of the old Coventry civic pageants; but he looks so peculiarly unsaintly and has so lecherous a grin that no one can for a moment dispute his entire suitability for the present part.

Coventry became so important a place in the early part of the fourteenth century that it was granted a charter of incorporation, and afterwards fortified with walls and gates. Parliaments were held there, in the

SUMMER DAYS IN SHAKESPEARE LAND

stately buildings of the Priory; Coventry Cross became one of the most famous City Crosses in the kingdom, and the trade guilds were among the richest and most powerful. The mayors, too, were important and fearless magistrates, as we may judge from the example of John Moreby, who in 1411 caused the riotous Prince Hal, a favourite of Henry the Fifth, to be arrested for creating a disturbance, and thus ranks with Judge Gascoyne, who on another occasion committed the Prince to prison.

Shakespeare rightly made Falstaff more ashamed to march through this rich and populous town with his ragged company of a hundred and fifty soldiers, and only a shirt and a half among the lot, than Godiva had been to ride through the primitive place of three hundred years before, with nothing—

“If I be not ashamed of my soldiers, I am a soused gurnet . . . you would think that I had a hundred and fifty tattered prodigals, lately come from swine-keeping, from eating draff and husks. A mad fellow met me on the way and told me I had unloaded all the gibbets and pressed the dead bodies. No eye hath seen such scarecrows. I'll not march through Coventry with them that's flat; nay, and the villains march wide betwixt the legs, as if they had gyves on; for indeed I had the most of them out of prison. There's but a shirt and a half in all my company; and the half shirt is two napkins tied together, and thrown over the shoulders, like a herald's coat without sleeves; and the shirt, to say the truth, stolen from my host at Saint Albans, or the red-nosed innkeeper of Daintry.”

Coventry, in right of this importance, became a city in 1451, and went on from good to better, until the suppression of the religious houses. At that time its population numbered 15,000, but within a few years

A COURTLY MAYOR

it had declined to 3000. Yet in another thirty years the city is found receiving Queen Elizabeth not only with enthusiasm and splendid pageants, but with the present of a purse of £100; although the depression was still acute.

"It is a good gift, an hundred pounds in gold; I have but few such gifts," said her Majesty, who was great but greedy.

"If it please your Grace," answered that courtly Mayor, "there is a great deal more in it."

"What is that?" she asked.

"The hearts," he rejoined, "of all your loving subjects."

"We thank you, Mr. Mayor," said the Queen, "it is a great deal more, indeed."

But she did not confer the honour of knighthood upon him.

James the First, visiting Coventry in 1617, was given £100 and a silver cup; probably in the hope of getting a renewal of the charter; but in the next reign we find a very different spirit. "Ye damnable puritans of Coventry," says a letter-writer of the time, "have thrown up earthworkes and rampires against his Maiestie's forces, and have put themselves in a posture of defence." It was at this time that the expression arose of "sending to Coventry" any objectionable person. Those thus consigned to Coventry were prisoners of war, Royalists captured by the people of Birmingham, for whom no prison could be found except in this walled and fortified city.

Those walls were promptly destroyed at the Restoration, by order of Charles the Second, the citizens of Coventry offering no objection. They had grown weary of the Commonwealth, and when the King came to his own again the city was given over to festivity. The

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fountains spouted claret (not good claret, nor very much of it, we may suppose); bonfires blazed; and a deputation waited upon the King in London and gave him £50 and a basin and ewer of gold.

Coventry Cross, already mentioned, was built between the years 1541-44, at the time of the city's decay, after the suppression of the monasteries, and was the gift of Sir William Holles, Lord Mayor of London, who bequeathed £200 for the purpose. It was described by Dugdale as "one of the chief things wherein this city most glories, which for workmanship and beauty is inferior to none in England." But soon after Dugdale wrote this the Cross wherein Coventry so gloried was destroyed, and the chief outstanding architectural feature is now formed by the spires of St. Michael's, Holy Trinity, and Christ Church: Coventry indeed being known far and wide as the "City of the Three Spires." It is rather unfortunate that the fine grouping of these three spires, seen best from the approach to the city by the Kenilworth road, is spoiled by the most distressingly commonplace houses in the foreground; and that from no other point of view do they group at all.

St. Michael's spire, incomparably the finer, rises with the tower to a height of 303 feet; that of Holy Trinity to 237 feet; and Christ Church to 201 feet. St. Michael's church has the reputation of being the largest parish church in England, a distinction claimed also by St. Nicholas, Great Yarmouth, and St. Mary Redcliffe, Bristol. The honour appears to belong to St. Michael's, which in other ways is a notable building. It is generally said to have a nave and four aisles, the two additional "aisles" being really chapels of similar length and appearance: the work of the Smiths' and Girdlers' Companies and the Fellowship of Woollen Cardmakers; two among the great trading guilds of the city. The

COVENTRY CHURCHES

Carpers, the Dyers, the Mercers, the Drapers and the Smiths had also their part in these outer aisles. The greater part of the church is of the Perpendicular period and is due to the local family of Botoner, who expended their substance lavishly upon it—

"William and Adam built the Tower,
Anne and Mary built the Spire;
William and Adam built the Nave
And Mary built the Quire."

So ran the old rhyme. The works were in progress between 1373 and 1436.

A narrow road separates St. Michael's from Holy Trinity, which, although in itself a fine Perpendicular building, suffers by comparison with its greater neighbour. Here also the guilds—the Tanners, Marlers, Butchers and others—exhibited their wealth and piety in the building of chapels; and here was a noble stained-glass fourteenth-century window containing the figures of Leofric and Godiva, with the inscription—

"A Church for the love of thee
Doe make Coventre Col-free."

Christ Church retains only its ancient spire, the ruined body being replaced in 1829 by a work in the most lamentable style.

Besides its churches, Coventry is famed for its ancient "St. Mary's Hall," originally the hall of St. Mary's Guild, but afterwards serving as that of the Holy Trinity, a religious society which amalgamated and swallowed up St. Mary's and many others. It became the headquarters of the old municipal life of Coventry, and so it still remains; a noble centre for the city's business and hospitalities.

Coventry nowadays is remarkable for its modern manufactures. In the thirteenth century it was soap that supported the city. Later it was prosperous in

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the making of woollen fabrics, needles and pins, and famed for a dye known as "Coventry Blue." As time went on, silk-weaving and ribbon-making took prominence, and doubtless it was from Coventry that the promised "fairing" was to have come that is mentioned in the old ballad of that faithless Johnny who was so long at the fair—

"He promised to buy me a fairing to please me,
A bunch of blue ribbons he promised to buy me,
To tie up my bonny brown hair."

But by 1869, when the duty on foreign-made silks had been removed, the silk and ribbon trade began to decline, and the enterprising citizens turned to the manufacture of sewing-machines. Then came the velocipede, the bicycle, and the motor-car. In the making of those two last-named articles and in that of ordnance, Coventry has found its fortune. They are not Shakespearean manifestations, and so need not be enlarged upon in this place.

In spite of its modern growth, Coventry remains a very picturesque city. In Butcher Row, and in narrow old alleys little touched by modern developments, something of the mediæval place may yet be traced; and in those two charming old almshouses, Bablake's Hospital, founded in 1506, and "Ford's Hospital," built in 1529, half-timbered work is seen very nearly at its best.

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